L. A. Olive

HINTON'S

THEOLOGICAL WORKS

IN SIX VOLUMES.

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THE

THEOLOGICAL WORKS

OF THE REV.

JOHN HOWARD HINTON, M.A.

In Six Volumes.

VOLUME II.

SYSTEMATIC AND EXPOSITORY DIVINITY.

LONDON:
HOULSTON & WRIGHT, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1864.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE present Volume commences with one of the earliest and most generally known of my publications —that on the Work of the Holy Spirit in Conversion. The revision of it for the press has given rise to very peculiar and deeply interesting emotions. I can distinctly trace the germ of it among the elements of my earliest religious exercises, and can recall vividly those earnest and resolute processes of thought by which, during the first years of my ministry, I wrought out my conclusions. It has seemed almost strange to me to be reading an argumentative book which I wrote nearly half a century ago, and have scarcely read since. I wrote it as little more than a boy, I have now read it as an old man, and every step of the argument I have carefully tested as I have gone over it again. With what result? It might have been to find that maturer thought or enlarged experience had led me to change my opinions; and if it had been so, I would at once have confessed it. Not in the slightest degree, however, has this been the result; and the views which I presented to my brethren as the belief of my youth, I present to them with increased confidence as the belief of my old age.

For typographical reasons I have been obliged to insert in this Volume my Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans. This work I have carefully revised, and I hope somewhat improved; and I trust that the omission of the Greek Text of the Epistle, inserted in an arranged form in the first edition, will not be considered a draw back from its value.

In order to supply matter for the few remaining pages, I have inserted at the close of the Volume a short piece entitled Man's Response to the Gospel, which appeared in the fifth volume of the "Monthly Christian Spectator." This paper is immediately pertinent to the subject treated of in the first work in the Volume—to which, indeed, it may be regarded as almost an Appendix.

The Volume is completed by a tract on Prayer, which was published in 1836, and is also closely connected with the subject of the treatise on the Work of the Holy Spirit. It is the tract to which reference is made in the Advertisement to the third edition, page 5.

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THE WORK

OF THE

HOLY SPIRIT

IN CONVERSION,

CONSIDERED

IN RELATION TO THE CONDITION OF MAN AND THE WAYS OF GOD;

WITH

PRACTICAL ADDRESSES TO A SINNER

ON THE PRINCIPLES MAINTAINED.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO

THE THIRD EDITION.

A THIRD edition of this work having been called for, I have taken the opportunity of submitting it to a severe revision, both of sentiment and diction. In the latter respect I hope I have effected some improvement; nor have I found myself altogether without employment in the former. It is not that my views on the main subject—the ability of man for his duty—have undergone any change; but I have detected one point in which I had not consistently maintained them. I am bound to acknowledge the inconsistency, and to explain the correction I have made of it.

In the former editions of this work, the third part commenced with a statement that impenitent sinners are encouraged to pray for the Holy Spirit; and the first chapter of it was devoted to "the ministration of the Spirit in answer to prayer." In a tract which I have subsequently published* I have opened a different view, and one which I feel, I confess, to be not only more satisfactory, but the only scriptural and consistent one. I have, therefore, omitted altogether the portion which originally stood as chapter i., part iii.; and have modified accordingly the argument on the question of a sinner's praying for the Spirit, in page 181.

I have found occasion also to re-write, and considerably to enlarge, what I had before said on the subject of regeneration. This will be found at page 154.

At the close of the first edition I appended a few questions in a catechetical form, and an enlarged catechism at the close of the second. This I have now omitted. Upon maturer

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* "On Prayer," 32mo.

consideration, I think religious catechisms universally objectionable. My reason is, that, by the peculiar use into which it is brought, a catechism practically supersedes the Scriptures, and gradually acquires for itself in the mind of the learner the character of a standard of truth and orthodoxy. The regard paid to the catechism of the Church of England is an obvious and melancholy illustration of this idea; and a similar influence has been exerted—not less truly although less extensively—by the first and second catechisms of Dr. Watts, that of the Assembly of Divines, and others. It would be a mischief that the Scriptures should be thus practically superseded, even were the catechism in all cases "a form of sound words," inasmuch as it contains the words, not of God, but of man: but the mischief is immeasurably aggravated by the consideration, that there is no security for its truth. I do not wish here to lay stress upon the fact—which however is obvious enough—that religious catechisms, as a class, contain large admixtures of error; what I mean to insist on is, that there is not, and cannot be, a single catechism the freedom of which from error can be guaranteed. All of them are productions of fallible men, and are consequently fallible. Nor do I suppose that I run any hazard in saying, that no catechism in existence contains unmixed truth. It is, therefore, a thing of incalculable danger to allow a catechism to become practically a child's bible, and to usurp the place in his regard which is due only to the Oracles of God. Yet such is the effect, even when answers in the catechism are largely supported by quotations from Scripture; the catechism is not brought to be tried by the Bible, but the Bible is brought to support the catechism.

I am not to be understood in these remarks as objecting to catechetical instruction, but only to the use of catechisms. The difference between these is obvious and important. Catechetical instruction, or instruction after the manner of question and answer, is undoubtedly of the best adaptation and the highest utility; but it in no way involves the necessity of using a catechism. Let the teacher use the Bible, and from it both frame his questions and draw his answers. It may be more trouble, but it has many and most important recommendations. So fully convinced, at least, is the author of this book, of the hurtful and perilous tendency of using catechisms, that, if he ever entertained the ambitious thought

of adding one to the number by which the religious world is already perplexed, he has abandoned it for ever. He would rejoice if all the catechisms which ever existed should be consigned to oblivion.

In the year 1834 an edition of the present work was published in the United States, "with an Introduction and Additions," by my brother, the Rev. Isaac Taylor Hinton, then at Richmond, Virginia. I take this opportunity of expressing my affectionate gratitude to him, for the trouble he has taken to render the work more adapted to a transatlantic circulation, and the fidelity with which he has executed his design. One remark in his preface it may not be improper for me to quote.

"It is possible that, from the similarity existing between some of the sentiments, and even, perhaps, in a few instances, the expressions, contained in this volume, and those of some eminent American theologians of the present day, it may be surmised (as indeed it has already been by one of the ablest of our periodical journals) that the former resulted from a perusal of the writings of the latter. Justice demands that the editor should state, that he can vouch for the fact from his own knowledge, that, at the period when Mr. Hinton wrote this work (in 1829) he was not conversant with the writings of American theologians of a later date than those of the justly-celebrated Edwards. Whatever opinion may be formed of the following pages, they are the result of an independent mind, taking the Sacred Scriptures as the only and the sufficient rule of faith and practice."

On this I have only to observe, that I should have thought it no dishonour to have learned from such able theologians as are to be found in the United States; but the fact is as my brother has stated it. It is only since writing this work that I have had the pleasure of becoming acquainted with the later American divines.

I have growing reason to be thankful for the influence which the pages I am now again committing to the press are exercising on the public mind. May I be permitted to say, that I could wish the *whole* impress of them to be received? Perhaps I had better frankly confess that I have found some excellent persons who, saying that they agree with me in sentiment, only partially agree with me, retaining some collateral sentiments which I cannot but deem erroneous.

Thus, to quote an example of what I mean, one esteemed brother holds, as I do, that all men can come to Christ; but then he holds also, as I do not, that some will come to Christ more than the Father draws to him. Another agrees with me in the former opinion; but he believes that the origination of the Christ-ward progress will be of man, and not of God. A third is equally concurrent with me in the main principle; but he is surprised how I can maintain in harmony with it the doctrine of election. I am happy to find sensible, reflecting Christians agree with me in any point; but I should be more happy if they would agree with me in all. I must profess, at all events, that, in the collateral points I have mentioned, I do not agree with them. It will be seen by a careful reader that I do not. I thank God that he has enabled me to hold in reverence and love the doctrines of sovereign and distinguishing grace; and my rejoicing is that, in man's ability for his duty, I have advocated a sentiment from which they derive both their consistency and their glory.

The advertisement to the second edition I have omitted. The only important part of it will be found incorporated with the work itself at page 163.

LONDON, *Jan.* 12, 1841.

PREFACE.

I AM extremely unwilling to associate any personal considerations with a subject of such deep intrinsic importance as that of the following Treatise. Much rather would I have stood retired as concealed by the glory of the truths I shall be employed in exhibiting, than have had any occasion to divert the attention of a single reader to a topic of so small comparative moment as the mere opinions of the writer. But the circumstances under which I write do not allow me this gratification. It must be known to some of the readers of these pages that the sentiments which I have already published have been conceived, unjustly as I imagine, to be derogatory to the character and office of the Holy Spirit, if not inconsistent with any belief of his influence. It will, therefore, infallibly be supposed that I have resolved upon this undertaking because I felt myself challenged to an explicit statement of my opinions; and, while some will read what I may write with, perhaps, scarcely any other design than to see how far I may clear up the alleged intricacies or contradictions of a theological system, it will be difficult for others to avoid associating a similar feeling with the perusal of this volume.

That I have commenced this work in part because of the alleged inconsistency of my sentiments on some points with scriptural views of the work of the Holy Spirit I am not disposed to deny; but this is far from being, either my only, or my principal impulse. Not at all unwillingly, indeed, do I answer the challenge which has reached me to explain and to vindicate my sentiments, inasmuch as I am not only without consciousness of doing dishonour to the Spirit of all grace, but persuaded that the views which I have advocated render him more abundant glory; but I do so much the more willingly, I do it even joyfully, because the subject itself on which it calls me to treat is one of infinite excel-

lency, and one upon which nothing can be wisely and seriously written without being, under the Divine blessing, conducive to good. Nothing can be more important than to have right views of the Holy Spirit's work, and few things more necessary than to lead persons generally to a habit of vigorous and scriptural thought respecting it. My aim and my hope will be, therefore, to the utmost possible extent to treat the subject *as by itself*, as though it had never been a matter of controversy, and especially as though the writer had no personal relation to the argument; and while I do this in order that the following pages may be the more eminently fitted for general usefulness, I earnestly entreat those who peruse them to concur with me in the same design, and to read, not with a view of criticising the writer, or of estimating his success as a controversialist, but with a desire to become thereby both wiser and better. That what I write may be adapted to this end, may God in mercy grant me the teachings of that blessed Spirit of whose work I am about to treat! Whereinsoever I may err, either in sentiment or in spirit, may he graciously forgive! And the effort itself, with all its feebleness and imperfection, may he condescendingly own and accept as a tribute from a grateful heart to the glory of his name, and as an instrument offered by a willing hand to the promotion of his cause!

It might be expected, perhaps, that I should take some notice of those who have written in express opposition to me; but, though I desire to treat them with the utmost respect, and to cherish for them all due affection as fellow-labourers according to the best of their judgment in the cause of God and truth, the reasons which I have assigned above induce me to proceed without any further reference to them. As to their works, I have endeavoured substantially to answer them, without reducing the discussion of truth to a dispute with individuals.

In order to anticipate a feeling of dissatisfaction which might possibly arise in the perusal of this Treatise, I beg the reader carefully to observe that it refers to the *work of the Spirit*, and *not to the work of Christ*. The work of our Lord Jesus Christ is of unquestionable necessity and glory. His divine person, vicarious sacrifice, and prevailing intercession, constitute the substance of the Gospel, and the only way for a sinner's approach to God. But as no writer can be ex-

pected to treat of all subjects in one book, so I conceive that the necessity and excellency of the work of Christ stand perfectly distinct from the question discussed in the following pages. When we ask *Whether a sinner has or has not power to come to God, or to fulfil his duty*, we do not expect to receive for answer, *No man can come to God but through Christ; a sacrifice is necessary.* Undoubtedly it is, and it would be unutterably to our surprise if ever we had been supposed to question it. But by such a reader the ground on which we stand would be quite misunderstood. We suppose the necessity of an atonement to be admitted; we take for granted the actual and absolute helplessness of man in this respect, and maintain as decidedly as any person can maintain that he has not power, in any degree or in any sense, to make an expiation for sin: we assume also that the blood of Christ has been shed as that of the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," so that the way is now open for a sinner's return to God through him. Not until this point has our inquiry any existence. It is only then that we ask, Has a sinner power to come to God,—that is, to avail himself of the way mercifully opened for his return.

Every candid reader will accept this explanation, and estimate the argument of the following pages accordingly. If it should be thought nevertheless an unfair position to start from, I only say that I can set out from no other. I never imagined such a thing as that man was capable of making an atonement for his sins, nor will I ever affirm it. If I cannot maintain man's ability to do all his duty without maintaining by implication his ability to expiate his transgressions, this must be shown with more clearness than has hitherto been attempted. Certain as it is that an atonement for sin is indispensable if sinners are to be saved, I am not convinced that it is the duty of a sinner to atone for his iniquities, or that God has ever required this at *his* hands. Satisfaction for sin could never be required but with a view to salvation; and nothing has ever been required of a sinner in order to salvation but acceptance of a sacrifice already offered, or prepared. The necessity of an atonement is altogether dependent upon the hypothesis that sinners are to be saved; if they are not to be saved there is no such necessity. And, although it is true that the ever-blessed

God has entertained the idea of saving them, it is uniformly declared that he has done so in a way of mercy, providing for them the needful expiation, and not requiring it of them; in which latter case salvation would have been of justice and of debt. I will not, however, pursue this subject further without further need. Let me only hope that my readers will bear fully in mind that the doctrine of atonement for sin is not involved in that of man's ability, as regarded in the following argument. The question simply is whether, the death of Christ being supposed, a sinner is able to come to God through him.

As the subject of this volume is not the work of Christ, so neither is it the whole work of the Spirit, but simply that work in the conversion of a sinner; and this only in its relation to the condition of man and the ways of God. The recollection of this may tend to prevent dissatisfaction that I have not asserted the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit; that I have not expatiated on the several parts of his glorious work; and that I have not even entered into any detailed account of conversion itself. Upon all these points I believe I am truly orthodox, and I am quite willing to afford any reasonable evidence that I am so; but it is on all accounts better that the argument should not be encumbered with matter not necessary to its clear and satisfactory prosecution.

If a mistake does exist in the general belief and mode of instruction on the point here discussed—if those who teach inculcate, and those who are taught imbibe, the notion that men cannot repent, or do any other part of their duty, while they certainly can, this is manifestly an evil of no small magnitude, and one most urgently demanding a remedy. Leaving it to the following pages to argue the question whether man can repent, I may here allude for a moment to the immense force with which the contrary sentiment has long been impressed upon the public mind. The ministry of the Divine Word has been widely and deeply impregnated with it; and, as this is the principal means of general religious instruction, from this cause alone the opinion must have obtained a very extensive prevalence. But, in addition to this, if we examine the formularies which are employed for the instruction of the young we shall find the same sentiment expressed, without, so far as is known to the

writer, a single exception.* The catechism is, perhaps, a more powerful engine than the pulpit itself; since the ideas it contains are thrown into the mind at so early an age, and with an air of such unquestionable authority, as almost

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* The following may serve as a specimen :—

Catechist. My good child, know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thyself, nor to walk in the commandments of God, and to serve him, without his special grace.—*Catechism of the Church of England.*

Q. Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?—A. No mere man since the fall is able, in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God.—*Assembly's Catechism, Q.* 87.

Q. Can you of yourself love and serve God and Christ?—A. No; I cannot do it of myself, but God will help me by his own Spirit, if I ask him for it.—*Watts's First Catechism, Q.* 20.

Q. But is not your heart itself sinful, and have you power of yourself to repent of sin, and to trust in Christ, and obey him?—A. We have sinful hearts, and cannot do these duties of ourselves; but God has promised his own Holy Spirit, if we pray for it, to renew our hearts to holiness, and help us to do his will.—*Watts's Second Catechism, Q.* 50.

Can you make your own heart good?

I am so wicked and so weak,
My heart I cannot better make.

Little Child's Catechism in Rhyme, p. 11.

Can you change your own heart when you please?

It is not in my power, I own,
To melt this stubborn heart of stone;
My evil passions to subdue,
And my depraved soul renew.

Milk for Babes, p. 34.

Q. Are we able to change our own hearts?—A. Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil. (Jer. xiii. 23.)—*Abridged Bible Catechism,* viii. 2.

Q. Can you reform and renew your wicked heart?—A. No; I am dead in trespasses and sins.—*Brown's Short Catechism, Q.* 14.

I am not aware of any exception to this melancholy uniformity. Let it be observed that the catechumen is taught that he cannot serve God in the strict and proper sense of the term *cannot;* the only sense in which a young child can understand it, and that very sense in which, as shown in the following pages, *it is false.* If any person will take the trouble to look for a question or answer relating to our just responsibility for our conduct, he will find that this is a point systematically avoided. Upon this highly important subject the mind is left totally uninformed, nor can any instruction be given upon it without contradicting and destroying the fallacy introduced in its stead. How is it no catechism-maker has happened to insert this question, *Why does God hold you accountable?* Or, if he had, upon the principle which has been universally adopted, what answer could have been given to it but this,—*Because I am not able to regulate my own conduct?* The reader may observe also, that the only method by which it is attempted to surmount the difficulty, is by saying that God has promised his Holy Spirit to them that ask him: a specious but delusive representation which will be found exposed at page 70.

inevitably to form the characteristic elements and controlling principles of all future thought. If, therefore, the sentiment of man's inability be poison, (and I believe it is poison of the most direful kind) it is poison which has been mixed for ages with the whole supply of religious knowledge among us, the Word of God alone excepted; and even this, in defiance of its own purity, has been made subservient to the mischief. Into the breast of almost every creature who has received any evangelical instruction at all has this pernicious notion been infused by the teachers to whom he looks up, often with too implicit deference; and, like his mother's milk, it has become insensibly incorporated with his whole being. Is it not time that vigorous efforts were made to correct the mischief?

Because in some instances the question here considered has undergone much discussion with little apparent advantage, and persons have arisen from conversation or from reading neither convinced nor enlightened, it has been conceived that some fatality attends it, as though it were never to be understood, or as if it required some peculiar metaphysical skill; but, when due allowance is made for the influence of pre-conceived opinions, and habits of thought and expressions not only long-established but interwoven with all that is dear and important to us in religion itself, it is conceived that the subject is attended with no extraordinary difficulty. For, if it were, this should operate to prevent us from forming *any opinion at all.* How can that be difficult *in itself* respecting which we find it very easy to make up our minds, provided it be *on one side?* This is exactly the case with the question before us. Persons in general find no difficulty in understanding, or in supposing that they understand, that man *cannot* do anything; yet there is an insuperable difficulty in comprehending that he *can.* The grounds of both these conclusions are of precisely similar character, and any one who knows *why* he believes the former is quite competent to examine all the reasons which may be adduced in behalf of the latter. To those who have never thought upon the subject at all, and who *take it for granted* that man cannot do anything merely because others think or say so, there may be some difficulty; a difficulty, however, by no means peculiar to this subject, but attaching with little difference to every topic upon which

the mind has never been exercised. Such readers should ask themselves how far it becomes them to take up any religious sentiments without a knowledge of the grounds of them. Can there in such a method be any security against mistake, or any rational conviction at all? If, however, they will not arouse themselves to a sufficient effort, it is only for them to wait a little while till those who *will* think have gone before them; this fearful difficulty will then vanish of itself, and they will thenceforth find it as easy to believe that man *can* do what he ought, as they now find it to be certain that he *cannot*.

If there is any one class of persons who should more especially feel themselves called upon to give the subject of this Treatise the most patient and dispassionate attention, and who should most resolutely spurn the fetters of previous opinion and customary phrases, it is surely the ministers of the Gospel, whose voice is heard above all others in the instruction of mankind, and whose labours exert so powerful an influence in the formation of public opinion. How important it is for those to speak according to truth who speak for God, and for those to lead in the right path whom so many take blindly for their guides! How soon would the most deep-rooted and wide-spreading errors be exterminated, if the whole public ministry lifted up its voice against them! In all corrections of error the ministry ought not to follow, but to lead. I am aware, indeed, of the difficulty which there is in doing so. I know that certain forms of sentiment and phraseology sometimes acquire in the eyes of the people a greater sanctity than even the Word of God, and I am far from condemning the spirit which dictates tenderness to the prejudices of pious persons; yet it is surely possible to carry such a spirit too far, and in our unwillingness to wound their feelings to spare and confirm their mistakes. There is little pleasure in encountering prejudices, but there may be in it an urgent duty, and out of it may arise important results. At all events the path of the man of God is clear. He has to speak the truth plainly and fearlessly, save the fear of him by whose ultimate approbation we stand or fall; and perilous will his account be, who shall stand convicted at another day of having kept back any part of the counsel of God because his people might not like to hear it. If, however, the ministers of the Gospel will not

lead in the progress of truth, they must *follow;* for, with or without them, *truth will prevail.* Though less rapidly, she will diffuse her light among the people, whatever may be the ignorance or hostility of any portion of the priesthood. When it is seen that she conquers all will be pleased to be on the triumphant side; and not least of all the author himself, whose recantation shall not be delayed a moment, when it can be shown to be demanded by the sovereign authority to which he bows.

The subject is the more earnestly to be pressed upon the consideration of the ministers of the Gospel, because of its intimate connexion with the revival of religion; a topic to which a measure, though as yet a small measure, of public attention has been drawn. I cannot suppress my conviction, that one reason why the preaching of the Divine Word has been far less powerful in our land than might have been expected considering the multitude of voices employed in it, and far less powerful, too, than it has been in a country where such exertions are much less abundant, is to be found in the influence of the sentiment of man's inability for his duty. Comparatively few of the preachers in the United States of America are tainted with it, and it is under the ministry of those who are free from it that the most blessed effects have been produced. Upon this point I cannot refrain from introducing the following interesting testimony, contained in a letter from the Rev. W. C. Walton, of Alexandria, U.S., and inserted with approbation by the Rev. H. F. Burder, of Hackney, in the Supplement to the Evangelical Magazine for 1829:—

"For a number of years after I commenced preaching, my views of man's inability to perform the duties required in the law and in the Gospel rendered it impossible for me to see his guilt in neglecting these duties. I maintained that he was culpable for not *using the means* to get a new heart, but it never once occurred to me that he was guilty for *not having* a new heart; or, which is the same thing, for not loving God and obeying the Gospel. I did not consider that the enmity against God which constitutes the carnal mind is *voluntary.* I often spoke of the necessity of divine influence in conversion, but I did not prove to the sinner, what I now think to be susceptible of the clearest proof, that the necessity of divine influence arises from the *unwil-*

lingness of the sinner to do that which God requires. During that period of my ministry my preaching was comparatively useless. In the year 1822 providence led me to Baltimore, where my views were changed, and where I was blessed with a revival of religion. I published a narrative of that revival which has gone through several editions, and which has been honoured as the means of producing several revivals. I have now been in this place about two years, and we have had about one hundred and fifty persons added to our communion in a comparatively thin population. You will pardon me for saying so much about myself, when I assure you that it is not myself, but the truth, and the God of truth, that I wish to magnify. To his name be all the glory."

Whatever causes may be hopefully operating towards the production of similar results on this side of the Atlantic, the author has little expectation of their extensive appearance until the ministration of the quickening word is, in like manner, loosed from its miserable shackles, and sinners are driven without ceremony from a refuge of lies which has been held sacred far too long.

THE

WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT,

ETC.

PART I.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CONVERSION CONSIDERED GENERALLY.

THE form in which the subject of this volume is announced carries with it the general sentiment, that the conversion of a sinner to God is a work in which the Holy Spirit is concerned; and it may be desirable in the outset to devote a brief space to an exhibition of the scripture testimony on this point. We shall find it to indicate and establish two great positions; namely, that, in reference to the conversion of a sinner, the influence of the blessed Spirit is both necessary and effectual.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Necessity of the Spirit's Influence in Conversion.

THE operation of the Holy Spirit in the conversion of a sinner is not occasional, but uniform. Conversion to God never has taken place, and never will take place, without it. And if this be the case, it is but saying the same thing in other words to assert that his influence is necessary to the production of this effect.

This is manifestly a point on which, independently of divine revelation, we have no means of obtaining complete

and satisfactory knowledge. When any one does in fact turn to God, under what influence he did so might be doubted were it not revealed; and yet more difficult might it be to decide whether any other man would turn to God without a given influence, unless that also were declared by a being of competent information. According to their various views some might suppose one thing and some another; but the voice of authority puts all our imaginations to silence, and announces the truth as from him that knows the heart to its lowest depths. We turn, therefore, necessarily and directly to the language of Holy Writ; and we may place the passages which bear upon the subject before us in such an arrangement as follows.

1. Sometimes the existence of an unconverted state is expressed by asserting the absence of the Holy Spirit: as in Jude 19, 20, where ungodly men are described as "sensual, having not the Spirit." If the fact of not having the Spirit be evidence of an unconverted state, it is plain that no man is converted without becoming a partaker of it.

2. Sometimes the presence of the Spirit is made a criterion of a converted state. So when Paul says, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his," Rom. viii. 9. And John bears a similar testimony: "Hereby know we that we dwell in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit," 1 John iv. 13. There can be no force, nor even truth, in these passages, except upon the principle that the influence of the Spirit is uniformly connected with conversion. If in any case it were not so, in that case these texts would be inapplicable.

3. Sometimes the sacred writers directly ascribe to the Spirit the exercises involved in conversion to God. So in 1 Pet. i. 22: "Seeing ye have purified your souls by obeying the truth through the Spirit." "Obeying the truth," though under another form of speech, is identical with conversion; and the apostle affirms it to have been done "through the Spirit."

4. Sometimes the success of the Gospel generally is referred to the power of the same glorious agent. 1 Thess. i. 5: "For our Gospel came unto you not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Spirit." "Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken

of Paul," Acts xvi. 14. "The epistles of Christ, written not with ink, but by the Spirit of the living God," 2 Cor. iii. 3. Now the Gospel is the grand means of conversion, and its success lies in the accomplishment of this end; but this is declared to be effected by the accompanying influence of the Holy Spirit.

5. Sometimes the operation of the Spirit is represented as forming an essential part of the method of salvation. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit," Titus iii. 5. Any one who has not experienced "the renewing of the Holy Spirit," therefore, is a stranger to the very operation by which salvation is wrought, and consequently to conversion.

6. Sometimes the condition of man by nature is represented as requiring the influence of the Spirit. "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life. No man can come unto me except the Father which hath sent me draw him," John v. 40, vi. 44. The only assignable influence by which an unwillingness insuperable by persuasion can be overcome is that of the Holy Spirit; which, therefore, is clearly necessary to the conversion of a sinner.

7. The change of heart and character involved in conversion is made the subject of a corresponding and characteristic promise. "A new heart will I give you, a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh: and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes," Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. How much of the excellency and glory of this passage must be lost, if even its very truth were not impeached, on the supposition that the influence promised is not necessary to the end for which it is to be effused!

8. The influence of the Spirit holds a prominent place in the acknowledgments of all good men. It was thus with Paul: "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. By the grace of God I am what I am," Rom. vii. 18, 1 Cor. xv. 10. And in accordance with this is the language of all saints, ascribing the glory of their salvation to God alone. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and thy truth's sake," Psalm cxv. 1.

Nothing can be more decisive than the various yet uniform evidence of Scripture on the point under consideration; nor is it easy to imagine that any man regarding the authority of the Divine Word can entertain a contrary opinion, or a sentiment which necessarily implies it. In the face of this overwhelming mass of divine testimony, it were scarcely less than insane to doubt for a moment, not merely the high importance, but the uniform necessity of the Spirit's influence to the conversion of a sinner. It may be added, however, that these declarations have an echo in the breast of every man. Those who would read their own hearts would be powerfully led towards this conclusion, even if it had not been revealed; and what the Divine Oracles affirm is established by the universal fact, that no man ever does turn to God without the acknowledged interposition of an unseen influence, making him willing as in a day of power. The author cannot conclude this chapter without humbly acknowledging his part in the general truth. As he finds it in his Bible, so he finds it in his bosom. There is no fact of which he has a more thorough conviction than this, that in his nature there dwelleth no good thing, but, on the contrary, every evil; and that the influence of the blessed Spirit is truly necessary for him to think a good thought. Had the experience of even a short life not taught him this lesson, he must have been blind and infatuated indeed.

CHAPTER II.

Of the Efficacy of the Spirit's Influence in Conversion.

The second position which, we have said, the Sacred Scriptures establish respecting the influence of the Holy Spirit in conversion, is that it is certainly effectual. By this language we mean, that, whensoever the Spirit operates upon the heart of a sinner for his conversion, he invariably accomplishes the work. He never abandons the object, nor are there any cases in which his influence is ineffectual to its attainment.

That there are many and great obstructions to conversion is readily admitted; but it must be manifest, we conceive, without any proof, that the divine agent of whom we are speaking is competent to remove them all. Being divine he is also almighty. Difficulty is a word totally inapplicable to him; and not less so in the conversion of a sinner than in any other work he undertakes. If it be his gracious pleasure, therefore, to operate effectually to this end, there is nothing to hinder him from doing so. But have we reason to think that he will?

1. In taking, as of course we do, the affirmative side of this question, we may argue from the wisdom by which it must be conceived that the proceedings of the blessed Spirit are directed.

Now it is one of the most obvious dictates of wisdom that a work which we do not mean to finish should not be begun; and not less so that when a work is begun it should be finished, unless there be some paramount reason for its abandonment. Nor are these dictates of merely human wisdom, since they are stamped with the impress of divine sanction in the following address of our Lord to his disciples, Luke xiv. 28–30: "For which of you intending to build a tower sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build and was not able to finish." And if it be thus a matter of just reproach that a man should begin what he is not able to finish, how much more so if he should commence a work which he did not mean, or had not constancy enough, to complete though he were able?

We need not hesitate, therefore, to apply the rule before us to the operations of the blessed Spirit. If his proceedings be sufficiently characterised by wisdom to withdraw them from the mockery of "all who behold" them, he will begin nothing which he does not mean to finish; nor will he without urgent cause forsake the work of his own hands. We say *not without urgent cause*, not because we think such a cause has ever existed, or ever will exist; but to make the hypothetical concession for the sake of argument, that, if any good reason can be shown why the work of conversion should be abandoned by its glorious author, we are ready to allow

its force. But can any such reason be shown, or even be conceived of, in reference to a being to whom all possible circumstances are foreknown? A reason that would lead to the abandonment of a work should operate yet more powerfully to prevent its being undertaken; so that, as no new reason why the Spirit should renounce his design to accomplish the conversion of a sinner can be supposed to arise after he has commenced his work, its relinquishment, should it ever take place, could be ascribed to no other causes than such as would involve both the undertaking and its author in a total want of wisdom, and a just exposure to dishonour.

But the force of this argument is not yet fully stated. The accomplishment of conversion when the work is begun we have shown to be necessary to shield its author from shame. But every work of his is to redound to his glory. How much more, then, is it to be maintained that he will make this work complete, since it cannot otherwise "shew forth his praise"! How inconceivably strange would it be, if, instead of this, he were only to surround himself with fragments, which, if even beautiful and durable in themselves, would only be on that account the more lasting and afflictive sources of dishonour and regret!

2. If there is force in the general bearing of the preceding argument, it will be augmented by referring to the special character and pre-eminent excellency of the work in question. For if there be any object which, rather than another, a person of wisdom will strenuously pursue, it is surely such a one as exhibits the highest excellence, and leads to the most important results. Let the work of the Holy Spirit in conversion be regarded in this light. Without assigning it a pre-eminence over all his works, we must at all events allow it a very high elevation among them. It far exceeds the works of nature and the administration of providence. It is the new creation of the soul in the image of God. On the part of the blessed Spirit it is the exertion of a holy energy, and the production of a holy result. It is intimately connected with all the hopes and joys, the purity and devotedness, the redemption and glorification of the soul on which he acts. Out of the depths of corruption and iniquity it prepares materials for a holy edifice, a temple of the living God, a monument of grace, to adorn eternally his palace in the skies. In whatever light we regard the conversion of a

sinner, therefore, we cannot for a moment imagine that such a work would voluntarily be abandoned by its author. O no! Sooner should creation itself be forsaken, and the course of providence be confounded, than the influences which turn a sinner to God fail of their intended issue.

3. Further confirmation of this sentiment might be derived from the gracious character of the work of conversion. It is undertaken not merely for the glory of its author, but also for the happiness of its subject. It is represented as arising from the grace or love of God towards the sinner, and not merely so, but from rich and abundant grace; that is to say, in undertaking the conversion of a sinner the blessed Spirit means to do him a favour, and a favour of unspeakable magnitude and excellency. Now there is plainly no way of realising this representation but by the work of conversion being completed. If it be begun and not completed, if the influences of the Spirit be withdrawn and the sinner be left in his sins, he may be treated justly—nay, in a general view of his condition, he may be treated even mercifully; but it is plain that he does not receive that particular favour which consists in an actual conversion to God, and an intention to communicate which appeared to be announced by the exertion of some incipient influences conducive to this end. It can hardly be conceived that the blessed Spirit would commence the work of conversion without an intention to complete it, or without an exercise of that deep and tender benevolence from which it is declared to spring; but an incomplete conversion, which is in fact no conversion at all, is no exercise of grace at all, since it makes no change for the better, whether conditional or actual, in the state of the sinner himself. To be an exercise of grace, conversion must be not only begun, but finished. We therefore conclude that where it is begun it will be finished; because it is incredible that the Holy Spirit would represent his proceedings in a light in which they cannot justly be regarded.

4. To add but one consideration more, we may advert to the connexion subsisting between the work of the Spirit and the work and glory of Christ. It is not only for his own sake, nor for the sake of the sinner himself, that the Holy Spirit undertakes the work of conversion; it is pre-eminently for Christ's sake—through the influence of his death, and for the promotion of his glory. Sinners are to be turned to God

because Christ died for them, and in order that Christ may be glorified in them. Nothing can be conceived more powerfully to operate on the Spirit himself than such an influence as this. Certainly, if any object can do so, this will call forth his utmost energies and most persevering efforts. Will he ever relinquish a design which he undertakes out of love to the eternal Son of God, and the accomplishment of which is essential to the glory that shall recompense him for his sufferings? Impossible! It is impossible, then, that he should relinquish the conversion of a sinner; having commenced it he will assuredly carry it on to perfection.

The reasoning which has been here pursued might be carried much further; but sufficient has been said, perhaps, to show the grounds on which the sentiment of the efficacy of the Spirit's influence in conversion rests. If it should be observed that we have not, as in the former chapter, adduced individual texts of Scripture, it will yet be admitted that our whole argument has proceeded strictly on scriptural grounds, which are, of course, of the same authority and conclusiveness as express testimonies of the Divine Word. But suppose we inquire in passing, why it is that express testimonies on this point are not so abundant in Holy Writ as on some others. The reason plainly is that it never seems to have admitted of the possibility of a doubt. Whether God, having converted a sinner, would carry on the work of grace to the end of life *might* have been doubted; and therefore it is expressly declared that he will, Phil. i. 6: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." But whether, having put forth his power for the conversion of a sinner, that object shall be accomplished is a point on which the Scripture bears no express testimony, except that which is involved in the declaration that he is "God Almighty."

Upon what ground, indeed, it may well be asked, has it ever been imagined that the contrary could occur? We believe we are correct in saying that it is upon no other than the supposed necessity, on the part of the Divine Being, of a deference to the will of man. A man must not be converted, we are told, against his will! To speak of the grace of God, or of the influence of the Spirit, as irresistible, it is alleged, destroys free-agency! We care not about the word irresistible, which, if employed in this reference at all, means

only, as we have said above, certainly efficacious; but it must be manifest, we should imagine, out of what a confusion of ideas this objection arises, since conversion is not the turning of a man to God without or against his will, but a man himself turning to God. It is a change of his entire attitude—accomplished under divine influence, indeed, but only in such a way as to make him willing; which, we suppose, is neither against his will, nor destructive of free agency. It is at the same time plain enough that, if the influence employed in conversion were such as left the ultimate decision to a corrupt and carnal heart, the work would never be accomplished at all.

The author is aware that the Holy Spirit has been supposed to exert upon the minds of sinners some influences which do not issue in conversion. It does not appear to him that any such influences are exerted; and the scriptural ground usually alleged for this opinion is, in his judgment, altogether unsatisfactory and fallacious.

Among the passages regarded as most directly supporting this idea are the following: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man," Gen. vi. 3. "They rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit," Isa. lxiii. 10. "Ye do always resist the Holy Spirit," Acts vii. 51. We take these passages together because one explanation is applicable to them all. It is this; that the influence of the Spirit referred to is not his direct influence on the heart (of which we have been speaking), but his influence exerted through an inspired ministry. Such was that of Noah and Moses, of the prophets and the apostles. It was through them that the Spirit strove with men, and it was in them that men resisted him. When Wisdom is represented as saying (Prov. i. 23), "Turn you at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you," the idea is still that of the communication of inspired truth.

When passages from the epistles are quoted with a similar view, we have only to express our surprise at the inconsiderateness manifested by it. Certainly some discrimination was used by the apostles as to the parties to whom they addressed their respective counsels. We know that Paul said "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God" on one occasion, Eph. iv. 30; "Quench not the Spirit" on another, 1 Thess. v. 19; and on a third "Work out your own salvation with fear and

trembling, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure," Phil. ii. 12, 13: but surely he said these things to pious persons, and not to the unconverted. When these precepts are treated as addressed to the ungodly, and made texts (as they sometimes are) for preaching to sinners, there is, in my opinion, a heedless and lamentable perversion of the Oracles of God.

The case is still worse, however, with another passage which is frequently employed for a similar purpose; I refer to the words of the apostle in 1 Cor. xii. 7, where he says that "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." The context unequivocally indicates that these words relate only to the supernatural gifts which characterised the early age of Christianity, and which more particularly adorned the church at Corinth. These, the apostle teaches, were bestowed on the parties who possessed them for the profit of others.

What has hitherto been advanced may be thus briefly summed up. The influence of the Holy Spirit is both necessary and effectual to the conversion of a sinner. These are sentiments of great glory and deep importance. May God impress them deeply on the heart of the writer, and withhold him from uttering a word or entertaining a thought inconsistent with their truth, or calculated to obscure their excellency!

PART II.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CONVERSION CONSIDERED IN RELATION TO THE CONDITION OF MAN.

THE influence of the Holy Spirit is, as we have just seen, of high importance—nay, of uniform necessity, to the conversion of a sinner. Now this fact obviously indicates a corresponding feature in the condition of mankind. There must be some cause for this necessity, some reason why men do not turn to God without heavenly aid. What is this cause? Is it external or internal? Is it without man or

within him? Is it voluntary or involuntary? Does it criminate man or excuse him?

Few inquiries can be more important than these; a clear answer to them being indispensable to a just knowledge of the condition of our nature, and to a satisfactory view of the bearings of the glorious dispensation—that, namely, of the Holy Spirit, to which our attention is directed.

The uniformity of the fact in all circumstances that men do not turn to God of themselves, as well as the decisive testimony of Holy Writ that they will not, assures us that the cause sought for is to be found in their own bosom. Whatever of an external kind may assume the aspect or bear the name of a hindrance to conversion, none of these things, nor any combination of them, can be regarded as constituting the grand impediment. In truth, these all derive their influence from the state of mind on which they act, irrespectively of which they are utterly powerless; and were the state of mind right nothing would hinder man from turning to God. The main and only effectual obstruction is within his own breast.

This obstruction to conversion is well known by the general designation of the corruption or depravity of man's nature. But when we have said this we have gained no information respecting its precise character; we have merely given it a name, and have still to inquire what may be intended by it. On the specific nature of that fact in our fallen condition which occasions the necessity for the Spirit's interposition an important diversity of opinion exists, which may be stated as follows.

On the one hand it has been maintained that the necessity of divine influence argues on the part of man a want of power to turn to God: and on the other it has been conceived that the obstacle is not a want of power, but a want of disposition. In reference to the actual want of right disposition in mankind both these classes of divines are agreed, the difference between them relating simply to one of two questions: First, whether a want of disposition is the whole hindrance to conversion, or whether there is not also a want of power; or, Secondly, whether a want of power is not identical with, and constituted by, a want of disposition.

Those who affirm that power is wanting chiefly argue, either from express words of Scripture, which declares (to

take one passage for an example) that no man *can* come unto Christ except the Father draw him; or from the nature of the case, since, if man had power to turn to God of himself, the Holy Spirit could not be necessary for this purpose. Those who maintain that power is not wanting (and the writer is among them) do not shrink from fully meeting these arguments, with others which will be hereafter noticed on the same side; while their proofs are brought likewise from the language of Scripture, as well as from an examination of the structure of the human mind and of the actual operation of the Spirit, from the just responsibility of man, from the gracious and sovereign character of the gift of the Holy Ghost, and from the pre-eminent tendency of the sentiment they advocate at once to humble the sinner and give glory to God.

Such is a bird's-eye view of the field of inquiry which lies before us; a field which comprehends certainly a number of topics most interesting in themselves, and bearing powerfully on many points of doctrine, experience, and practice. The writer would feel little pleasure in pursuing his task if he thought it would be barren of spiritual profit; but, as he is persuaded this will be by no means necessarily the case, so he implores for himself and his readers that gracious unction beneath which alone true wisdom is either acquired or increased.

Before entering fully into the discussion, the reader's patient attention is requested to some important preliminary matter, relating generally to the structure and operations of the human mind, and the import of the terms by which we describe them.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Structure and Operation of the Human Mind.

If we were examining the movements of a machine, and seeking to understand the causes by which they were either accelerated or impeded, we should probably deem it necessary

in the first instance to gain some competent knowledge of the nature of the machine itself; or, if we should heedlessly have commenced our investigation without such a preliminary measure, perplexities and embarrassments would speedily convince us of its necessity. It is thus with the inquiry now before us. We wish to solve problems respecting the state and operations of the mind under particular circumstances, namely, under the prevalence of depravity and the influence of the Holy Spirit. Is it not, therefore, not only desirable but necessary previously to acquire a proper view of the structure of the mind itself, and of its general mode of operation? Should we be ignorant or inaccurately informed of these, how can we proceed with satisfaction, or conclude with confidence, respecting the questions immediately before us? Upon these subjects, therefore, we shall here briefly enter, and with the utmost attainable simplicity. We trust that the explanations which may be given will be found neither difficult nor uninteresting; but, if in any measure they should be so, let it be remembered that what is important should never be considered too uninteresting to be attended to, or too difficult to be achieved. In fact the topics on which we are about to enter are not difficult, and they can appear to be so only because to some readers they may be new. They ought not, however, to be mysterious to any person, and the author hopes they will not be so to any of his readers after the perusal of the following pages.

I. It has been customary to speak of the powers or faculties of the mind, and, doubtless, it is both necessary and just to use this phraseology; yet it should be remembered that, however familiarly we may speak of them, they are things of which in their own nature we know absolutely nothing. The whole that is submitted to our investigation is comprehended in the various modes of human action, external and internal. From the fact that certain modes of action occur we infer that there exist faculties or powers of performing such actions. This conclusion is unquestionably drawn with sufficient justice, inasmuch as we can conceive of no effect without a proportionate and corresponding cause; but still it is important to observe that it is only by such an inference we arrive at the knowledge even of the existence of our mental faculties. It follows, therefore, that the proper

method of investigating the mind of man is to begin, not with his faculties but with his actions. Observe what he does, and you will then learn what are his powers. Our facilities for such an employment can scarcely be considered as less than ample. In how many forms is man continually acting within our observation; while, in truth, the whole mystery is exhibited in our own breasts, and the knowledge of man is nothing more than the knowledge of ourselves.

Let us then imagine one of our species to be before us; or rather, let us turn our eyes inward, and mark what takes place there. If I do this, I find that I am perceiving various objects with their apparent properties; such as the fields in their summer beauty, my children in their early loveliness, with a variety of others, which may be presented to me either by the senses, or by recollection, or by reflection. Besides this, perhaps I find that I am also in a state of feeling; experiencing either hope or fear, desire or aversion, pleasure or pain, or feeling of some other kind, in various degrees or with various modifications. I may yet further find myself upon some occasions, perhaps after considering various motives or modes of action, ultimately determining; as either to attend to some subject, to take some step, or to enter on some pursuit, after which I proceed to act. These observations will be sufficient for the present. Here are matters of fact. We perceive, we feel, we determine; and, upon the supposition that these processes argue the existence of corresponding faculties, we go on to say that man possesses one faculty of perceiving, another of feeling, and a third of determining. The faculty of perceiving we may call the Understanding; that of feeling, the Heart; and that of determining, the Will. These three faculties are principally concerned in all human actions.

II. We may now look at each of these a little more closely.

1. By the Understanding, or the faculty of perceiving, we apprehend according to their apparent nature, and so far as they are suited to our apprehension, whatever objects are presented to the mind. Here it is material to remember that there are many ways by which objects may be so presented. The most obvious is the eye, which certainly makes us acquainted with things much more vividly than any other

organ; but it is clearly not the only channel of access to the mind, distinct perceptions being also produced by impressions on the ear, and by means of every other corporeal sense. In addition to this, the mind is accessible to communication from some beings (*one* at least, if no more) without the intervention of the senses at all. It is important to observe also that objects can be presented to the mind out of its own stores, either as brought out of the treasures of memory, or as resulting from the exercise of its own thoughts. A very important portion of these last consist in those judgments respecting right and wrong of which we shall hereafter speak.

Now, whatever object—using this word in a sense sufficiently large to comprehend a sentiment, or any thing else which may be perceived by the mind—whatever object is in any way intelligibly presented to the mind, we perceive it inevitably. It is no matter of choice with us whether we will perceive it or not. If I look on the sky, or hear a bell, or am informed of an event, or recollect an interview, it does not lie with me to perceive or not to perceive these things respectively. I do perceive them, and that in a manner altogether involuntary and beyond my control.

It is to be added that whatever is presented to the mind is perceived according to its apparent nature and properties. Of the nature of things we know little, if anything; we have to do with their properties only, and in a manner perfectly accordant with these is every object apprehended by the mind, if it is in a sane state.

2. By the Heart, or faculty of feeling, we become subject to the excitement of desire, aversion, hatred, love, and numerous other affections. These affections must be considered as not existing of themselves, or without a cause. They have always some object. We are never in a state of desire without desiring something; or of sorrow without something for which we are sorry; excepting indeed in cases of disease, which, of course, are withdrawn from the scope of our present inquiry. In a sound state, and in its healthy exercise, no feelings exist in the mind unless awakened by some object. Until excited in some respect it is altogether tranquil.

The next material observation is that our feelings, when excited, correspond with the apprehended nature of the object which has excited them; as fear with the perception

of danger, or hope with the prospect of advantage. It is impossible to conceive that there should be any variation from this rule. If ever what I regard as adapted to engage my love inspires me with aversion, I shall not be of sound mind; as long as I am so, my feelings must have an exact correspondence with the apprehended nature of the objects which have awakened them.

All objects have not an equal adaptation to excite our feelings, nor the same objects equal efficacy in all circumstances; but all objects which are adapted to move our feelings at all are so independently of our choice. A sight of danger, for example, does not appeal to us, as it were in the way of interrogation, whether we will be afraid or not; but the perception of it tends directly to inspire fear whether we will or not, and it will certainly do so unless its influence be counteracted by some other means. It is, in truth, a general maxim, that every object presented to the mind having any adaptation to move the feelings, produces infallibly an excitement of them corresponding with its apprehended nature, unless such an effect is prevented by the operation of a counteracting cause. It follows also that our immediate feelings are in many cases involuntary; they are so in all cases, indeed, in which they are not affected by some voluntary productive or modifying influence.

3. By the Will, or faculty of determining, we form resolutions respecting what we will or will not be or do. This is clearly not to be understood as referring to our outward conduct alone. Whether we will attend to any given subject, or agree to a certain proposal, and many things more which are entirely within the bosom, are matters for our determination; as also, in truth, is what we shall be, and what we shall feel, as far as these are dependent upon the use of means put into our hands.

The Will does not act of itself, nor indeed can we conceive of such a thing. We never make any determination without having a perception of the case respecting which we have to determine, nor without being moved by something so perceived. Determination is neither more nor less than the answer to a question—Shall I, or shall I not?—and cannot be conceived of apart from circumstances which give rise to such an interrogatory. If there is no question there is nothing to be determined; and, if there is nothing to be

determined, no determination can exist. Neither can any determination be formed without something in the case perceived to move us to it. In a general way it is perfectly obvious that our determinations do arise from such moving causes. When we say I will do this, or I will not do that, it is because we see something either attractive or repulsive in the cases respectively; and, if we examine, we shall find that this is uniformly the case. The rule has, and can have, no exception. It is of the nature of a rational creature to determine according to apparent reasons; in whatever case a determination may be otherwise formed, if such ever were or can be, it can scarcely indicate less than a derangement, if not rather a subversion, of the constitution of the mind.

We go on to observe that, as we never come to any determination without a moving cause, so every cause acts according to its apparent force; and it tends to the production of a corresponding result by virtue of our intelligent constitution, quite independently of our choice. If, for example, I see danger and the sight moves me to determine upon avoiding it, it tends to bring me to this determination by its own force as perceived by me, whether I am willing to be so moved or not. My actually determining to avoid it may be hindered by the influence of other considerations, such as the advantage I may derive, or the good I may do, by braving the peril: but my being led towards such a resolution is still involuntary; and each of these modifying considerations also has a tendency to act upon me, whether I will or not, according to its nature and force as perceived by me.

Determinations, therefore, do not in any case originate with the will itself. This faculty never acts, it was not intended to act, it is not capable of acting, of its own accord. It may be moved, but it cannot move of itself. It will answer to the slightest touch, but it is itself absolutely inert; like gunpowder, which nevertheless the smallest spark inflames. The exercises of the will not originating with the will itself, but being produced by objects perceived, they are infallibly and inevitably such as are our perceptions of the objects which produce them. They are not voluntary.

In connexion with this statement, and as adapted to remove any appearance of paradox which may attach to it, it may be important to observe that the cases are very different when we speak of man as a whole, and of his

faculties apart. Man is a voluntary agent. Both his actions and character originate with himself. He is and does what he chooses or determines to do and to be. His determinations are his own, that is, they arise out of his own feelings; and in this self-origination the voluntary nature of character and actions consists. But, taking the faculties of man apart, such language is totally inapplicable. They are not voluntary. They are made to act when acted upon, and precisely as they are acted upon; and however they may give rise to voluntary action in man, there is nothing voluntary in their own. Our faculties have no choice whether they will act or not. How should they? The very notion is absurd. They are but of the nature of mechanism; adapted first to be acted upon, then as they are acted upon to act, and to propagate their action to a certain and ultimate issue.

Hence it may be seen how untenable the ground is which has been so hardly fought, namely, that the Will is, or ought to be, free. Doubtless *man* ought to be free, and we believe that he is so, however fallen and corrupt; but, without any reference either to the primitive or the degenerate state of man, the idea of freedom is totally inapplicable to the Will as a part of our intelligent constitution. The Will having no power of choice or self-movement, it cannot be either free or bound. From its nature it cannot act until it is acted upon; and if it does not act as it is acted upon the mind is no longer sane.

III. Having taken this brief view of the faculties of man separately, let us now consider them in their relation to each other, and in reference to the result of their combined operation.

The mental processes are often so rapid that it is not easy to analyze them, or even to believe them capable of analysis. We shall find, nevertheless, that every one of our actions engages all the powers of which we have spoken, and in a uniform and beautiful order. If we take a journey, it is because we have determined to take it; here is the action of the Will. Something moved us to this determination, perhaps the hope of pleasure, or a sense of duty; here is an excitement of the feelings, or the action of the Heart. But what excited these feelings? Obviously the perception of the duty or the pleasure; here then, lastly, is the action of

the Understanding. Such is the process which is carried on continually. First objects are perceived by us; next our feelings are excited in accordance with the objects perceived; then a determination is formed agreeing with the whole effect produced upon the feelings; and finally action is induced in conformity with this determination and all that has preceded it. Viewing the mind in itself, therefore, apart from all modifying or disturbing influences, we have a faculty of perception apprehending whatever is fitted to its powers, and transmitting these apprehensions as it were to an inner chamber where lie a thousand susceptibilities, all ready to be inflamed by whatever may be adapted to them respectively; while these again, by their simple or combined energies, lead to determination, and this leads ultimately to action.

The mechanism is extremely simple, yet most beautiful and efficacious; and, as might be expected from the peculiarity of its character, it produces a result worthy of the closest investigation. This result is not merely an external action. Various internal acts and exercises, or permanent states of mind, arise from it too; as, for example, an effort of thought, or an endeavour to cherish, to regulate, or to suppress any particular feeling. But whatever action, external or internal, or whatever feeling, permanent or transient, may be thus produced, it is evident it will have some striking and important properties.

First, It will be intelligent. Everything will be done for some known or knowable reason; since, according to the constitution of the mind, neither can feeling be excited nor a determination be formed but under the influence of objects perceived. In this respect mental differs from organic action, such as that of vegetable or animal bodies, which act by the force of physical and not by that of intelligent causes.

Secondly, It will correspond with the apparent nature of things. Every action being excited by objects perceived, it plainly follows that all our actions will be conformable to our perceptions, or to the nature of things as perceived by us: but every sound mind perceives objects according to their apparent nature; whence it follows also, that, if no disturbing influences interfere, our actions will strictly accord with the apparent nature of things, as truly as the rays of light are reflected from a mirror, or the face of the sky from an unruffled sea.

IV. In these observations we are, of course, to be considered as confining our view to the nature of the mind itself, and the manner in which it would operate by virtue of its constitution simply, apart from any disturbing causes. At the existence of such causes we have already cursorily hinted, and it will now be necessary more particularly to advert to them. We know that in point of fact the conduct of men does not always accord with the nature of things as it is most obviously to be apprehended, and as it is in reality apprehended by them. Besides which it may well seem strange that a being of such excellence as man, and one, too, upon whose conduct such awful issues depend, should be laid so entirely open to the influence of things about him or within him, that everything should thus tend to excite his feelings, to inspire determination, and lead to action, by its own force, whether he will or not. If he has no choice what he shall perceive, or what he shall feel, or what he shall determine, is he not exposed without defence to impressions of every kind, like chaff before the wind, or like a feather on the ocean, the helpless victim of his circumstances?

We go on, then, to observe that man is endowed with a faculty of self-regulation and control. The nature and influence of this faculty it is important that we should rightly estimate. We all know that upon various occasions we not merely apprehend the apparent properties of things, but we dwell upon them with more or less force, and for a longer or shorter period; we pay them, in a word, more or less ATTENTION. We know also the result of this. Some thoughts we immediately banish from our minds, and they are to us as though they had never been; others we dwell upon intensely, and they produce a deep impression. Now the fact is that the actual influence which an object presented to the mind will have upon us is not to be measured by its own nature and force, but by the intensity with which we contemplate it. A great truth, if we give it little attention, will produce but a small effect; while, if we give them much, we may be vastly wrought upon by trifles.

Whether this power of giving more or less attention may properly be called a distinct faculty of the mind, as by philosophers of great eminence it has been,* is of compara-

* See especially Professor Stewart's Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind.

tively little consequence. It is plainly a very influential mode of mental operation. The most important inquiry respecting it is how it is brought into action. In the exercise of attention are we voluntary or involuntary? Some pieces of intelligence are so touching that they fix our attention instantly, and rivet it in defiance of ourselves; while there are subjects, on the other hand, to which we attend, if at all, under a sense of duty, or perhaps of advantage. Attention has in part, therefore, a voluntary character. We can exert it when we think proper, and to what extent we think proper.

By this mechanism is generated our power of self-government. Since the influence of whatever is presented to the mind may be regulated by attention—may be practically annihilated on the one hand, or rendered prevalent on the other—it is plain that we have in our own hands the control of our feelings, actions, and character. Every man is thus put in possession of the key of his own heart, and is enabled to render it a sanctuary for the entertainment of select objects, inviolable to a great extent by whatever he may choose to exclude. If we can select the objects which shall occupy the understanding, we can in like manner select those which shall affect the heart, since none can affect the heart but those which occupy the understanding; if we can choose what topics shall impress the heart, we can choose what the state of the heart shall be, since it always corresponds with the topics which stimulate it; and if we can choose what the state of the heart shall be, we can equally fix our determination and our conduct, since they have an exact conformity with the state of the heart.

Our action being thus under our own control, it assumes a new feature of much interest and importance. It is henceforth voluntary. Up to this point we have seen the mind of man acting as it has been acted upon, repeating in its varied exercises neither more nor less than the impressions it has received; but, with the element now added, we behold the mind acting of and for itself, by the faculty of voluntary thought excluding and admitting influences at its pleasure, and becoming a primary source of intelligent action. Its action is in a new sense its own. It has now a power of originating action. It is no longer the victim of circumstances, but their lord.

It is necessary here to observe a distinction between those affections of the heart which are subordinate and transient and its habitually prevailing state. Affections of the former kind are often produced instantaneously, and for the moment uncontrollably, as by tidings of the death of a friend; the latter is the result of cherished and, perhaps, long continued contemplation of objects of a particular class. Such contemplation must inevitably form the prevalent state of mind, and thus in point of fact it is always formed; for so the miser pores over his gold, the imagination of the rake riots in sensual pleasure, the man of science has his thoughts in his lore, and the Christian his in heaven. When we say that the constitution of man gives him a power of self-control, we refer specifically to the habitual state of his heart. He can make it what he pleases, let him only fix his thoughts with corresponding intensity on congenial topics. And thus he has also an ultimate power over those violent, and at the moment irresistible, emotions to which he is subject; because the lasting influence of the objects which produced them may be modified by that of other considerations selected for this end.

If the faculty of Attention (to use this phraseology) shows us how man may be and do what he pleases, it will equally explain to us why in so many instances he is not what the state of things around him is adapted to make him, or why his conduct is so often at variance both with his interest and his duty. This melancholy result arises from inattention to the more serious objects set before him. He sees them, but does not regard them. The perception of them is momentary; they are instantly forgotten, and therefore wholly without influence. It matters not how momentous such things may be in themselves, nor how often they may be exhibited and perceived; if no attention be paid to them, or if the attention they are adapted to excite be withheld, they can exert no power. Trifles lighter than air will outweigh the most solemn topics, if the former be intently dwelt upon and the latter banished from the thoughts.

To this it may be added that inattention is the only method by which things fail to act upon us according to their apparent nature. As it is only by being presented to the understanding, and by engaging our attention, that objects have power of acting upon us at all, so, when attention

is engaged, their proportionate influence is certain and infallible. As no man can live seriously who does not habitually think of serious things, so no man can live in levity who does. The fixing of the attention determines the character and conduct with irresistible power and infallible certainty.

Before we quit the subject of Attention, it will be proper to advert to the connexion between this exercise of the understanding and the state of the heart. Some things instantly engage more attention than others; why is this? To some things I purposely pay more attention than to others; and why is this? It is plainly because my feelings are more excited towards one object than another. And this is equally the case whether attention be voluntary or involuntary—whether an object fixes my attention by its immediate interest, as tidings of the death of a friend, or whether it engages my attention by my own purpose and effort, as under a sense of duty; a sense of duty being as truly a feeling, or state of the heart, as a sense of pleasure or of grief. Either way feeling is excited, and proportionate to its excitement is the attention engaged.

It is material to remember that attention is voluntary only in part, and in some cases. In others it is altogether involuntary, as when arising from the influence of objects which powerfully interest the feelings. Here no purpose is formed to attend to them; yet the attention may be even rivetted for a time, in defiance of our most strenuous efforts. It is important to bear this in mind, because it shows how attention may be awakened in the first instance without any option of ours, and so become the impulse of further feeling, or the object of designed regulation.

V. As far as we have hitherto regarded the structure and operation of the mind, we have found it adapted to produce a species of action and feeling which is intelligent, and accordant with the apparent nature of things. We have found also that man has a power of regulating his feelings and conduct, whether according to the apparent nature of things or not; inasmuch as the power of giving attention to things in various degrees modifies the influence they are adapted to exert, and virtually alters their properties as apparent *to him.* But there is a further quality of our actions to which we must now advert. Man is capable of

doing RIGHT or WRONG; or, which is the same thing, of being right or wrong in what he does. This cannot be said of the brute creation. Take, for example, a lion or a bear, which, though they may revel in the blood of other beasts, or even in that of man, are charged with no crime; yet, if a man were to do the same with his fellow-man, we should hold him subject to blame. What is the ground of this difference?

It is simply this. The mind of man is adapted to the perception of moral truths, that is, of the good or evil properties of actions. He is capable of understanding that some things are wrong and others right. Sometimes he infers this for himself, sometimes he imbibes the notion from others, in both cases, perhaps, with considerable inaccuracy; but, let this be as it may, the ideas thus acquired are treasured up in the memory, and constantly brought into use in the way of forming a judgment both of others and ourselves. This perception of moral qualities, and even the formation of moral judgments, is no way dependent upon our choice. We do it whether we will or not, and with irresistible force, although the degree of attention we choose to give to the process may vary. This capacity of estimating actions according to a scale of good or evil, and this propensity in every case so to estimate them, constitute together what is called the CONSCIENCE of man, which is no other than the Understanding in this particular aspect and occupation.

Hence it is manifest how, in any voluntary action, a man may be right or wrong. While he is contemplating it, and before he has determined respecting it, his own mind passes a judgment upon it, and pronounces it to be either the one or the other. If he then does it knowing it to be wrong, he is plainly wrong in doing it. So, on the contrary, if his conscience testifies it is right, he is not wrong in that respect; although, if the action be not right in itself, he still may be wrong in not having taken greater pains to ascertain its character.

A similar illustration may be applied to the state of the Heart, which a man's conscience equally indicates to be right or wrong, and which, like his outward conduct, he has (as we have just seen) a provision for regulating. Whatever emotions the objects he perceives may excite, a judgment is instantly passed upon them with more or less accuracy expressing their character; and, if he finds improper affec-

tions excited, the suppression or the indulgence of them constitutes respectively his right or wrong conduct in such a case.

The additional mechanism by which an agent already intelligent and voluntary comes to be also right or wrong, is at once simple and efficacious. We are so constituted as to know good from evil, and irresistibly to apply our knowledge; in acting according to our knowledge our rectitude, as far as we now speak of it, consists; and hence, with the same limitations, we are right in doing what we perceive to be right, and wrong in doing what we perceive to be wrong.

But we have to go a step further. To right conduct we uniformly attach approbation, and blame to that which is wrong. We never doubt the propriety of this in ordinary affairs, and may think it strange to inquire into the grounds of this connexion; yet, as we shall see hereafter, it is important that we should do so. The case is this. We look upon the conduct of men in a thousand instances, and if we see nothing that strikes us as either right or wrong, we attach to them neither praise nor blame; but the moment we see any thing right we approve of it, or any thing wrong, we condemn. Why should this feature of men's conduct, and only this, induce so peculiar a feeling? Why am I to be any more praised for acting according to my knowledge of right, than according to a perception of sweetness? Or why blamed any more for the indulgence of a feeling which I perceive to be wrong, than for the admiration of what I perceive to be deformed?

It has been common to rest the answer to this question on the force of conscience, which certainly testifies to every man that, whereinsoever he has been either right or wrong, he is deserving of praise or blame accordingly; but, if this testimony of our conscience is true, there must be a ground or reason of its truth, and this reason it is for several causes important to discern. It will add, for example, great force to the testimony of conscience itself; it will tend to check the efforts and to impede the success of men who wish to rid themselves of its unwelcome admonitions by subtile but fallacious arguments; and, above all, it will tend to show the justice and the glory of our Maker's ways. We put the case, therefore, we hope fairly; and are quite willing to say, If the testimony of our conscience be unreasonable or untrue, let it be rectified.

Our answer to the inquiry is this. Our perceptions of right and wrong have a very peculiar power. And this in two respects:—in the first place, they make an immediate and inevitable appeal to our choice. We may see many things without either preference or aversion; but the moment we perceive anything to be right or wrong that state of indifference ceases, and we instantly approve or disapprove. So with respect to our own conduct. Innumerable actions might be proposed to us, not one of which we should care to adopt or to decline; but no action could appear to us to be right or wrong without our immediately being led towards a corresponding purpose, either that we would or would not do it. Respecting objects perceived as right or wrong, therefore, our ultimate decision is never involuntary; instantly, and from the very nature of these perceptions, they appeal to us for deliberate approbation or disapprobation, adoption or rejection: and these are voluntary exercises or states of the mind.

In the second place, perceptions of right and wrong enter the mind with a force imperative and supreme. They bring with them an immediate sense of obligation. Other things may be agreeable or disagreeable; I may like them or dislike them, and I may pursue or avoid them as I please: but with respect to things right and wrong the case is altogether different. Here is something that I ought to love, that I ought to do; nay, I must do it, or else I shall be wrong; it is binding upon me, nor have I any liberty to decline or to evade it. Now we are so constituted that this sense of obligation always accompanies the perception of any action as right, nor can these two things by any possibility be rent asunder. In addition to this, the sense of obligation is the most powerful of all the feelings of which we are susceptible. We may be attracted by pleasure, by gain, and by various other aspects of things, but to none of these do we feel it binding to yield—we may relinquish them if we please; but what we feel to be right we feel also to be imperative—it may not be left undone. So, on the other hand, we may be deterred by danger, by reproach, and by nameless other unpleasing aspects of things, yet, if we choose, we may encounter them; but, whenever we discover a thing to be wrong, we feel an absolute prohibition of it—it may not be done. The sense of obligation, therefore, being by far the most powerful

of all the feelings of which we are susceptible, it may be expected to take the lead of them all, and to exercise a supreme directing and controlling influence; and in the course of nature and by its own force it will infallibly do so, unless it is prevented by the interference of some other cause. To this sensibility of obligation all perceptions of right and wrong immediately appeal; an actual sense of obligation is instantly excited by them; and, as this is the strongest of all our feelings, it should of course uniformly prevail. If we suppose a case in which it does not prevail, let us ask why it does not. There is nothing capable of interfering with it but some other feeling, either previously existing, or at the same moment excited. If any such feeling were of superior, or even of equal power, then we might account for the obstruction without imputing blame to the agent; it would rather be referred to his constitution: but as this is not the case, the sense of obligation being the most powerful of all our feelings, here is a stronger feeling overcome by a weaker—the sense of obligation, for example, resisted by the love of pleasure. But how is it that the weaker prevails over the stronger, and that man does not act according to the tendency of his powers? It is plainly because he has been misapplying the voluntary part of them. At the same instant he had a call from duty and from pleasure; he felt that of duty to be the most forcible, yet he lent to it so dull an ear, and listened so eagerly to the voice of pleasure, that the feebler inducements of the syren prevailed. By his lending a quicker ear to what he knew to be the least forcible appeal this deviation from rectitude has been produced, and for this he is held to be deserving of blame.

The argument thus far may be summed up as follows:—We receive moral perceptions, and apply these to our own conduct; each moral perception calls upon us instantly to choose, and creates a conscious obligation to choose aright; this is the most influential feeling we are capable of, and has nothing to oppose it but a variety of weaker ones; our Maker, therefore, expects that it should prevail; and if it does not, it will be only because, by means of attention or inattention which we know to be disproportionate to the respective objects, we give greater strength to the feebler cause. We wilfully originate the evil, and the whole blameworthiness of it deservedly falls upon ourselves.

That this natural imperativeness and supremacy of the sense of obligation is not only a reasonable foundation of praise and blame, but that also on which these are universally awarded, will readily appear from a reference to matters of common life. Suppose yourself a parent interrogating a child who has been disobedient. You ask him, "Why did you strike your brother?" "He provoked me." "But ought you to have yielded to the provocation?" "No." "Ought you not to have controlled your anger?" "Yes." "Then you have been very wrong, and I am displeased with you." Both parent and child feel this argument to be perfectly conclusive; but what is at the bottom of it? Plainly this principle, that a sense of duty is in its natural tendency of greater power than any other feeling; and that, therefore, if other feelings are not controlled by it, it is not only a fault in itself, but *our* fault, inasmuch as it results from a wilful misapplication of our self-regulating powers. The same principle is at the foundation of all blame or praise.

If any person should be disposed to push the question a step further back, and to say, My conduct is produced by my feelings, and these are produced by the things presented to my mind, which I discern involuntarily, so that *I cannot help* feeling as I do, nor therefore acting as I do—should a man say this, we meet him by admitting at once, that, if this statement is true, he is free from blame. Most certainly all ill-desert is to be traced back to the state of the heart, which is the sole impulse of action and seat of character. Let a man only prove that he cannot help his feelings, and he will clear himself from all censure. But this is far from being the fact. Suppose we take the case of a man already in a state of wrong feeling, as of ingratitude, for example: he is conceived to say that he cannot help it; but we ask, Has he come to this state of feeling without a wrong use of his voluntary powers? He has surely at some time heard the admonition within him that he ought to be thankful; what attention did he pay to it? Did he inquire whether he was duly thankful, or how his gratitude should be properly expressed? Or did he turn his attention to some other objects, and abandon the duty of gratitude to forgetfulness? No doubt he has taken the latter course, thus making himself unthankful when he could have helped it.

We do not scruple to express our belief that, in whatsoever instance or degree the state of the heart may be wrong, it arises solely from wilful inattention to what would have influenced it aright. If we had given as much attention to every topic as we perceived to be its due, and our state of feeling had then been wrong, it would have been hard to be found fault with; but, if we have been less attentive to some of these topics than we know we ought to have been, and more attentive to others, by thus making a selection of the objects which shall operate upon us we have moulded the state of our hearts according to our own choice, and we are therefore justly responsible for its character. Whatever it may be, it is such as we have wilfully made it, by designedly dwelling on the topics under the influence of which it has been formed, to the exclusion of others which would have given it a different complexion.

It may be said, perhaps, that this selection of topics by which a wrong state of mind is induced may be made under the influence of feelings which had arisen involuntarily. Some of our feelings are doubtless involuntary; but it is to be observed that these immediately become subject to our moral judgment, by which they are pronounced to be either right or wrong; and if wrong, then follows an instant sense of obligation to suppress or rectify them. This sense of duty we have already shown to be stronger than every other mental stimulus, so that there can be no excuse for the indulgence or continuance of a wrong feeling in the heart, and none, therefore, for its further influence in engaging attention to improper objects. If a wrong feeling be instantly and perseveringly resisted, as we know it ought to be, it will lead to no evil.*

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* The influence of attention in leading to what is voluntary in cases in which itself is involuntary, seems to facilitate our conception of the mode in which sin might come into existence in a holy being. Whatever interests the feelings tends to engage our attention involuntarily, and therefore not sinfully; but, without care, it may be engaged unduly, or disproportionately. Disproportionate attention, however, produces disproportionate or improper feeling, and so commences the progress of sin. Our first parent, for example, saw that the tree was good for food, and a tree to be desired to make one wise. This was true, nor was it wrong that it should be interesting to her; nor, being interesting, could it fail of engaging her attention in a measure. But her attention was engaged disproportionately, and she neglected other considerations; hence undue attention excited undue desire, and the indulgence of this desire was sin. Had it been as soon repelled as the voice of conscience pronounced it wrong, Eve had come unhurt from the power of the tempter.

If the objector should say—But, feeling as I do, I cannot act otherwise, since my feelings determine my conduct—we allow it. But we reply, You ought to feel otherwise; and, however far gone you may be in evil disposition, it needs even now nothing more than a due consideration of all the topics presented to you to change your whole state of mind, and to produce within you a right spirit.

For it should be observed, in conclusion, that God in his infinite wisdom has so arranged the circumstances in which we are placed, that, if a due regard be paid to *all* the objects presented to our understanding, the state of the heart will infallibly be right. He has adapted the causes in operation to the nature upon which they were to operate, just as mechanical forces are proportioned to the machinery on which they are to act. Were not this the case, the whole world of morals would be thrown into disorder. To expect in us a right state of heart, when a due consideration of all things open to our observation was adapted to produce a wrong one, could not be otherwise than unreasonable; and it must be to the full as unreasonable to complain of such an expectation, when nothing more than a due consideration of known or discernible truths is requisite to its fulfilment. No further than we neglect such consideration does God condemn us; and as far as we do surely we cannot pretend to justify ourselves.

The author should apologise, perhaps, for occupying his readers so long with topics which may possibly be called metaphysical and abstruse; if, however, they have done him the kindness to accompany him attentively, he hopes they will not fail to derive an advantage which will amply recompense their labour. Should a single perusal not have enabled any one to master the subject, a second may do much to diminish the difficulty, or may probably overcome it altogether. We shall hereafter find how necessary a clear view of the elements of mental and moral philosophy is to a proper understanding of the questions to which we are approaching, and how decisively the principles which have been stated bear upon the chief points of the controversy. If we seem as yet to have made no progress, it is only because it is much better to determine our general principles apart from any reference to the particular subject to which they are to be applied. A little further extension of the reader's patience is requested in the perusal of the following chapter.

CHAPTER II.

Definitions.

After the brief exhibition given in the preceding chapter of the elementary truths relating to the intelligent and moral nature of man, it may be important to put down a few definitions of terms relating to them; both that we may the more clearly know what they mean when they occur, and that precision in their use may aid the accuracy and conclusiveness of our reasonings. They will often, indeed, of themselves, decide points which have been long and laboriously disputed.

DISPOSITION, INCLINATION, AFFECTIONS.

Terms of definite import are very desirable for the various states of feeling, or excitements of the heart. The habitually-cherished and prevalent state of the heart in any respect we call the disposition of a man in that respect. It differs from inclination, which is not necessarily either habitual or prevailing; it may be neither. It differs also from affections, which are occasional, temporary, and subordinate states of feeling. It differs, lastly, from will, which we conceive to mean either simply a determination, or the faculty of determining; it is not a state of feeling at all.

POWER, ABILITY.

Another term of great importance in the ensuing discussion is power, or ability; and it is indispensable to have a settled opinion respecting it before we proceed further. When may it be said that a man has power to perform a given action? To this we answer without hesitation, when he possesses the means of doing so. Let the definition be tried by examples. My power to walk consists in having the free use of my limbs; that is, in possessing the means of walking. My power to think consists in having the use of a sane understanding; that is, in possessing the means of thinking. My power to pay my debts consists in having sufficient property

for this purpose; that is, in possessing the means of paying them. My power to be sorrowful consists in having a heart susceptible of being affected by saddening considerations; that is, in possessing the means of being sorrowful.

Is anything else necessary to constitute power, besides the possession of means? And if so, what is it?

This question is put the more pointedly, because we shall have proceeded but a very few steps before the definition of power above given will be objected to by some readers, and something else will be deemed essential to it; we beg to suggest, however, that, if any objection be made, it should be made now, and not be brought out just when the pressure of the argument may be most severely felt, and when it can scarcely fail to have the appearance and effect of an evasion. What more, we again ask, is necessary to constitute power, than the possession of means?

Is our having a disposition towards any action essential to, or identical with, our having power to perform it? This is a critical question, with which we shall find ourselves involved hereafter, and one which it will be much better to settle now, without asking which side of the argument it will favour.

Suppose a case for illustration. A man is in full health, at perfect liberty, and with employment before him, but he is idle: has he power to work? Another has sufficient money to satisfy his creditors, but he is fond of gaming, and has no disposition to meet them: has he power to pay his debts? A rich man is importuned by a sufferer, but he is covetous: has he power to relieve the petitioner? In all these cases we conceive an affirmative answer must be immediately returned; yet they are cases in which disposition is wanting, and they lead to the conclusion, therefore, that disposition is *not* the same as power, or necessary to it.

Or conceive it to be granted, for the sake of argument, that disposition is power, or is essential to it. Then it will follow, that what a man is not disposed to do he has no power to do. Though a man be rolling in wealth, a love of dissipation destroys his power to pay his debts; though he be in full vigour, idleness annihilates his power to work; and it is only necessary to go great lengths in these bad dispositions to authorize any one to say, I am unable either to pay your bills or to labour for my bread! A person who should

use such language as this would be deemed a fit inmate for a lunatic asylum. Nothing is more common, and few things are more important, than the distinction between power and inclination. You can but you will not, is language almost incessantly used, and the distinction on which it is founded is the basis of some very important transactions; as when an idle fellow is sent to the treadmill, or an able but reluctant debtor to the prison.

To say that disposition is, or is essential to, power, is to attach a very extraordinary limitation to the idea of power itself. I have no power, I am told, to do anything that I am not disposed to do; yet there are an immense number of things which I am not disposed to do, which I have been always used to think I *could* do. For instance, I am surrounded by several hundred places, and am not disposed to go to any of them; but have I therefore no power to go to any of them? In that case I must be considered as fixed like a rock to my position, till I am disposed to move, with which disposition to move, it appears, my power of moving is identical. On the contrary, the obvious fact is that we have power to do many things, whether we are disposed to do them or not. The things are but few, in comparison, which we are disposed to do; and these are selected at our pleasure out of the much larger number which we have power to do. The state of the disposition has not the slightest connexion with the question of power.

It cannot but seem strange that such an idea as we have been noticing should ever have been entertained. It has apparently arisen from an erroneous view of the fact, that a disposition to act is necessary to the performance of an action; whence it has been hastily concluded to be necessary also to the power of performing it. Nothing certainly can be more obvious, than that a voluntary being *will* never act further than he feels a disposition to do so. Though I may take a journey whenever I please, so long as I am determined not to do so, it is quite certain that I shall not; yet one would think it equally plain that my power of doing it is not impaired by this certainty. To imagine that whatever is necessary to the performance of anything is also necessary to the power of performing it, is to overlook the difference that exists between power and performance, which, being diverse in themselves, do not imply the same requisites. The

mistake has probably been confirmed by not properly interpreting a familiar form of speech. We sometimes say of a confirmed miser that he cannot give; or of an habitual drunkard that he cannot refrain from the cup; or of ourselves when we have determined to do one thing, that we cannot do the contrary. Into the full force of this language we shall inquire in a subsequent chapter; at present it may be sufficient to observe, that it is very commonly employed, as it is obviously in these cases, to express willingness or unwillingness, without any reference to power at all.

There are clearly two very distinct states before us: namely, the possession of means to perform a given action, *with* a disposition to employ them; and the possession of the same means for the same action, *without* a disposition to employ them. The question is, which of these two states are we to call power. In all ordinary cases the latter is called power; and we are willing to adopt this nomenclature rigorously through the whole discussion. If any person should insist on giving the name power only to the former of these states, doubtless he would evade the following argument, but he would also needlessly depart from the common, and therefore the only intelligible use of the term, while he would leave the latter very important state altogether without a name. This would merely necessitate the construction of a new term, before he individually could be pursued through the perverse intricacies of his course.

We are quite ready to admit that the disposition towards an action seems to render the doing of it easy, and that a contrary disposition seems to render it difficult, sometimes even to impossibility. But it only seems to do so. By the terms easy and difficult, in this connexion, we understand only that actions are more or less welcome or pleasing to us, as must inevitably be the case in proportion as we are more or less willing or unwilling to perform them. It is manifest, however, that our power to perform an action is not at all affected by its being more or less agreeable to us. We are fully able to do some things which, nevertheless, we deeply abhor, and quite unable to do other things the accomplishment of which would give us great delight; so that, after all, though aversion may prevent action, it has no tendency to diminish power. However loath I may be to satisfy my creditors, even if I should be so reluctant as to make me feel it diffi-

cult, and even impossible, yet, as long as I have the means of doing so, I shall be held by all men of common sense to have the power.

Too much time, perhaps, has been spent upon this point, yet its importance required that it should be cleared up. If the reader feels satisfied respecting it, let him set it down as an axiom not hereafter to be disputed, that power consists in the possession of means; and that, although a man certainly never will do a thing without a disposition to do it, yet, by the possession of means alone he becomes fully able to do it, whether he will or not. If he should not feel satisfied with this conclusion, let him reconsider the subject, put his objections into a tangible form, and resolutely come to some definition of power by which he may be willing to abide, before he proceeds to the argument in which it will be employed.

FREEDOM, OR LIBERTY, OF MORAL AGENTS.

A third term which it may be desirable to define is freedom, or liberty, in its application to man as a moral agent. Much may hereafter depend upon the meaning we attach to these words.

By freedom, in a general view, we mean simply the absence of constraint; a state in which powers of every kind may act according to their nature without impediment. Thus the parts of a machine may be said to be free, when not obstructed in following the impulse of its moving power; so, in respect of the body, we have freedom when our motions are not coerced; and, in like manner, as intelligent beings, we enjoy freedom when the faculties of understanding, feeling, determination, and attention, can all be exerted according to their nature without obstruction.

Now man, as a moral being, is no other than an intelligent being acting under the perception of moral truths; so that his freedom as a moral agent consists in the unobstructed action of his intelligent faculties, and in this alone: nor can it consist in anything else, since there do not exist any other powers than these to be the instruments of his moral action.

The writer is not unaware how strenuously it has been urged that some other kind of freedom must pertain to moral

agents, such as a freedom of the will or a right disposition, of which he has perhaps said enough in another place.* The indulgence of such fancies is, in all probability, to be referred to that fruitful source of error which we have already noticed, the misinterpretation of analogical terms. Thus, for example, the existence of an evil disposition in men in their fallen state, and the known certainty of its result in the commission of evil, have led to the use of the words captivity, bonds of iniquity, and others of a similar character; very forcible and significant phraseology, doubtless, and, as metaphorical language, highly appropriate: but it seems to have been forgotten that it *is* metaphorical; or, if not, its just interpretation has at all events been disregarded. A man in bonds is not free to act; a man with a prevailing evil disposition is said to be in bonds of iniquity; therefore it is concluded that he is not free to act, and that a right disposition must be necessary to his moral freedom. This is the argument, and it seems, perhaps, conclusive. But in what sense is a man of evil disposition said to be in bonds? Literally, or figuratively? Surely in the latter sense alone. And what is the analogy on which the use of this metaphor is founded? Simply this, that, as a man who is in bonds will certainly not perform a given action, so a man who, although he is not in bonds, is ill-disposed, will with equal certainty not perform another given action. And this is all. The metaphor means nothing as to the actual want of freedom, because in this respect the cases are not analogous; but it denotes only the certainty of a specific line of conduct: it does not follow from the use of such language, therefore, however appropriate, that evil disposition constitutes an actual bondage, or that right disposition is necessary to freedom. Moral freedom can consist in nothing more than the freedom of the powers by which moral actions are wrought; and these powers are nothing more than the intelligent faculties of man. If there are any other, let them now for the first time be announced and described. Notwithstanding all that may be said of bondage, therefore, and allowing to this and other metaphors their full force, we do not scruple to maintain that moral freedom has nothing whatever to do with the disposition; but that, in this respect, a devil is as

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* See page 50.

free as an angel, and the most wicked man as free as the most holy.

RECTITUDE, DEPRAVITY.

One more set of terms it is important to define. Wherein consists the rectitude, and wherein the depravity, of human nature? Few words are more often used in the discussion than the latter of these, and a precise idea of its import will greatly facilitate the accuracy and value of its application.

We have stated that good and evil in man consist essentially in the state of the heart. Rectitude, therefore, which is a comprehensive name for whatever may be good in man, is primarily applicable to a state of the heart, and denotes a right state of it, or a right disposition. Depravity, consequently, can be neither more nor less than a wrong disposition, or a wrong state of the heart.

It is true, the other faculties of the mind are represented as depraved, and they do all of them, in fact, feel the pernicious influence of sin; but they do so only in a secondary and indirect manner, through the medium of the heart, on which the deteriorating effect of iniquity primarily and immediately fell. My understanding, for example, is depraved; that is, it does not now act aright in the apprehension and retention of divine things: but why? Not through any diminished competency to act as the instrument of perception, but through the influence of an evil disposition, which affects, not its condition, but its exercise. The depravity of the understanding, therefore, is but a branch of that of the heart, in which the root of the evil is planted, and the bitter fruits are borne in every department of the man.

If any should conceive that depravity destroys, or even weakens, our powers of action, it will be desirable for them to recollect what these powers are. We have shown that they are no other than our intelligent faculties; the question therefore is, whether a wrong disposition destroys or weakens the intelligent faculties. That it perverts them in actual use we allow, and that it sometimes leads to sinful courses which weaken, or even destroy them; but it must be allowed on the other hand, we think, that the intelligent faculties are not directly destroyed, or even weakened, by a wrong disposition. Wicked men have still the use of their reason, and

some of them have it in a pre-eminently powerful degree, though associated with dispositions evil enough to ally them with infernal beings. In whatever degree, or from whatever cause, the rational faculties are impaired, in an equal degree we most readily admit our power to be diminished.

The perplexity and difficulty which have been thrown into discussions such as those which are now before us, by the use of ill-adapted or ill-defined phraseology, or by neglecting to distinguish the strict from the analogical use of words, must be the author's apology for dwelling so long on these introductory matters. When a subject is either intricate in itself, or has become so through unskilful management, nothing is more conducive to its successful investigation than definitions and distinctions. In these, indeed, the very crisis of the argument lies. The differences that occur in the details of it frequently throw the disputants back upon more general topics; so that, until these are understood and agreed upon, the course of reasoning is perpetually broken, and can never be satisfactorily prosecuted. The author intends and hopes to use all his principal terms strictly in the meaning he has assigned to them, and to adhere rigorously to the principles of moral and mental philosophy which he has laid down. Such of his readers as may concur with him in these will form agreeable companions to him in his course, and he has a cheerful hope of gaining their acquiescence in his conclusions; but to what purpose should any go further who dissent from these axioms? To such readers his reasoning must always appear fallacious, and objections will continually throw us back on points which should have been previously determined. The decision of the religious argument is involved in the principles of moral philosophy from which we set out. Those who may differ from the author upon these, he requests to proceed no further, but to apply their thoughts to the reconsideration of them; for if the difference should be irreconcilable here it would be sure to be so everywhere else, and it would be better to part at once with mutual expressions of candour and goodwill, than to prolong a discussion which may irritate, but cannot convince. Should readers of this class choose to continue their perusal of this little work, he hopes they will do him, not the favour, but the justice, to recollect the sense he has given to his own terms; that, at all events,

whatever they may think of his arguments they may judge fairly of his consistency. If any should prefer passing by the general argument altogether, the author will meet them again with pleasure in subsequent chapters, on the plain and decisive ground of Scripture testimony.

CHAPTER III.

Whether Man in his natural state has power to repent:—The argument from the nature of the case.

After these explanations, we come to the question before us: namely, whether, in harmony with the admitted necessity of the Spirit's influence, it can be maintained that man has power to repent without his aid.

Let it be distinctly remembered, that we affirm man to have no disposition to repent, but, on the contrary, a prevailing aversion to it; but, according to the definition we have given, power is altogether different from disposition, and implies nothing respecting it. It is simply the possession of means, which is compatible with disposition of any kind.

The question, therefore, comes to this: What are the means necessary to repentance, or to effect an entire change of mind towards God?

They are, first, the opportunity of becoming acquainted with truths adapted and sufficient to produce such a change. For the consideration of suitable topics is the only method of effecting a change of any kind in our disposition, nor can a change be reasonably expected further than adequate reasons are shown for it.

Secondly, a state of the understanding physically sound, competent to discern and weigh the true import of the matters presented for consideration.

Thirdly, a regular connexion between the understanding and the heart, so that there may be no obstruction to the influence of the truths discovered and contemplated.

These appear to be all the means necessary to repentance; and it may safely be affirmed that, under these conditions,

consideration would infallibly produce it. If it would not, it must be either, 1, because the reasons presented were insufficient; or, 2, because the understanding could not discern and estimate them; or, 3, because, when discerned and weighed, they were not influential on the heart: all which things are contrary to the suppositions made. If motives adequate to change the heart produce their just influence, it is plain that the heart will be changed. It requires to be shown, therefore, whether the conditions enumerated meet in the case of a sinner or not.

First, then, Has the Most High presented to a sinner just and sufficient reasons for repenting? We are thrown here on the entire body of moral and evangelical truth, upon all that God has said respecting the foundations of duty, the force of obligation, the criminality and consequences of sin, and the grace and glory of his Gospel. When we ask whether a sinner may not find here good and sufficient reasons why he should mourn over his iniquities and forsake them, we feel as though the very question involved impiety.

Secondly, Is the understanding of man capable of discerning and weighing the true import of the statements presented to him? Undoubtedly it is, if he be sane. If any malady impairs his rational faculties, the excuse is valid; but nothing more than sane rational faculties is necessary to understand and reflect upon the Word of God. To receive it, or to feel delight in it, indeed, is not to be ascribed to a natural man; but these phrases indicate either a right state of heart, or the engagement of the understanding under a right state of heart; and they imply that which we contend for, namely, the faculty of previously discerning the import of the Divine Word, because, without this, it could neither be received nor rejected.

Thirdly, Is there any such derangement in the faculties of man, that the heart does not now yield to the force of objects entertained by the understanding? We know that it exhibits more sensibility to some objects than to others, but the fact that it feels the force of any is a proof that the faculty still exists unimpaired; while the circumstance that it does not feel equally or duly the force of all, is fairly to be accounted for by inattention to some topics and a preference of others. Let the case be examined, and it will be found that the heart is still, as truly and as forcibly as ever, affected by the objects

which occupy the understanding, in proportion to the intensity with which they are regarded.

The means of repentance, therefore, and all the means of repentance, are possessed by a sinner without the Spirit; but the possession of the means of repentance constitutes the power of repentance; therefore a sinner has power to repent.

It might be here said that, if a disposition to repent be necessary to actual repentance, it ought to be considered as a part of the power. This is just a specimen of the way in which the argument is liable to be interrupted by objections arising from its pressure at particular points; but it is sufficient to say that the meaning of our terms is already settled, and we cannot vary. If it is still to be debated what power is, the reader is in reality advanced no further than the 49th page of this little volume, and would do much better to return to it.

CHAPTER IV.

Whether, in the conversion of a sinner, power is imparted:—The argument from the work of the Spirit.

Having seen the condition of man without the Holy Spirit, let us now observe him under the influence of this divine agent, and endeavour to ascertain the nature of the work which He accomplishes in the heart. We have called it generally, the conversion of a sinner to God; but what is the conversion of a sinner to God? Or, when the Holy Spirit produces the conversion of a sinner to God, what does he produce? The question may seem too simple to be so carefully put, but we shall hereafter find it greatly to our advantage to have formed clear ideas on it.

Now the actual conversion of a sinner presents many details; such as an extensive change of his views of divine things; a variety of emotions, and often of conflicting emotions, in his bosom; a total change of his principles and preferences; and a corresponding change in his conduct and

pursuits. It is manifest, however, that in all this there is one grand and leading feature, one principal point of change, to which the rest are subordinate; we mean the change of the disposition, or of the habitually prevalent state of the heart. The change in the views is the means of producing this change of heart, without which a mere change of views would be of no advantage; from this change of heart springs the change of conduct, which could otherwise have no consistency or permanency; while the various and conflicting emotions which arise are the mere accidents of the change, modified by the previous state of the mind, and by the considerations chiefly instrumental in transforming it. In a word, then, that which the Holy Spirit produces in the conversion of a sinner, is essentially a change in the habitually prevalent state of his heart.

This may be easily illustrated. The state of a sinner's heart towards God while carnal is declared to be enmity (Rom. viii. 7); when converted it is love (Col. i. 21); and the conversion of a sinner consists in the accomplishment of this change. Once he hated God, now he seeks his friendship; once he avoided the Lord's ways, now he chooses them; once he delighted in sin, now it is his burden; once he lived far from God, now he desires his constant presence. This change is what the Holy Spirit produces when he effects the conversion of a sinner.

It may be added, that this is the principal result of the Spirit's work. In one view it is an ultimate result, to which the enlightening of the mind and the various exercises connected with it are conducive, and in leading to which their entire value consists; while in another view it is an initiatory effect, from which alone any true holiness or transformation of life can proceed, and by which it is secured. It is, in a word, the sum of true religion, which is accordingly declared to consist in having a new heart (Ezek. xviii. 31; xxxvi. 26); the restoration of man to essential rectitude, and to the image of God. To maintain this change, and to give it a uniform and universal influence, is the whole scope of the Spirit's operation.

The next point requiring observation, is the method in which this grand change in the state of the heart is produced. To an inquiry upon this subject the answer is ready and obvious; it is produced by a change of views in reference to

divine things. A sinner does not begin to love God, whom he once hated, without having some new ideas of his excellency; nor to hate sin, which he once loved, without some discoveries of its criminality. In order to convert the heart, the blessed Spirit enlightens the eyes; and hence he is represented as accomplishing his work by the instrumentality of the Word of Truth, Psalm xix. 7, 8; James i. 18; Eph. i. 18. The use and end of the change of views which always takes place in conversion, is that by them the heart may be transformed.

The views by which this change is produced, however, are in one respect far from being new; since they are only such as are contained in the Sacred Scriptures, and such as in many cases have been often presented to the mind before. What causes them now to produce a new effect? And what does the Holy Spirit do in order to give them this unusual efficacy? He induces a sinner to attend to them, and thus ensures their influence. Thus it is said that "the Lord opened Lydia's heart, that she attended to the things which were spoken by Paul," Acts xvi. 14.

The author is very desirous that his readers should fully satisfy themselves before they advance, whether the preceding is an accurate and scriptural account of the conversion of a sinner to God. If any of them should conceive that there is any further change produced in conversion, he entreats them to ask what it is, and not to satisfy themselves without a clear and intelligible idea of it.

If the preceding view of conversion be correct, it is manifest that the Holy Spirit acts herein in conformity with the intelligent constitution of man, as it has been already described. In all this process there is nothing extraordinary but the originating impulse; in all other respects it is precisely what takes place in every change of the feelings, and the very method by which a thousand changes in them are wrought every day. Here is the understanding dwelling upon certain truths, and the heart influenced accordingly. The extraordinary thing is that a man is come to dwell upon truths which he once banished from his thoughts; but this, it is plain, makes no difference in the truths themselves, nor in the state of the faculties which he employs upon them. Here is no change of power, but simply a different employment of the power which has been always possessed.

It appears, therefore, that, whatever the state of man as to power may be before he is influenced by the Holy Spirit, it is the same afterwards, inasmuch as the work of the Spirit makes no difference in this respect. He imparts no power, but merely sets in motion existing powers by an extraordinary impulse; so that, on this ground also, the power of turning to God must be admitted to exist without his influence.

If it should be suggested that the impulse thus given should be called power, we have only again to refer to our definition,* which we are very willing to alter if any of our readers will show cause; but from which, until then, every consideration forbids us to depart.

CHAPTER V.

Whether the possession of power is not involved in the praise and blameworthiness of actions:—The argument from the nature of sin.

THE actions and character of men are familiarly spoken of in terms which convey either censure or commendation. Similar epithets are likewise employed by God himself upon similar subjects. Hence, he speaks continually of righteousness and of sin. The conduct of men in an unconverted state he charges upon them as highly criminal; that is to say, the conduct from which the Holy Spirit, in conversion, causes them to turn away, he severely condemns. Now, familiar as this kind of language is, it carries with it an idea strictly and powerfully applicable to our present purpose. For, if an action, or rather the person by whom it is performed, be justly considered as worthy of praise or blame, it must be because there is some peculiar feature in his conduct, giving occasion to, and having a correspondence with, this peculiar view of it. The actions of volcanoes and whirlwinds are neither praised nor blamed, neither are those of brutes; why should those of men be so?

To deserve blame or commendation several conditions are

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* See page 49.

required; but the only one necessary to be here noticed, is the possession of power over our actions. This is uniformly and absolutely essential. If, for example, a man is praised that he did not go to a gaming-house, and it is found that at the time he was confined in a prison, the ground of the praise awarded him is taken away. That which renders a person praiseworthy in the doing of good actions is his doing them voluntarily, that is, of his own choice, and when, therefore, he might have done otherwise. In like manner, it is essential to blameworthiness that a man should have power to avoid an action, as well as to perform it. If your servant, for instance, has injured your property, you hold him criminal because of the apparent voluntary nature of the act; but, if it could be satisfactorily proved to you that it was involuntary, and not through carelessness merely, but by some external force which he had not the means of resisting, you would immediately alter your opinion, and clear him from censure. Every man feels that, when a fault is charged upon him, he makes a good and irrefragable defence if he can say truly, I could not help it—I did all I had power to do. A person who should persist in attaching blame when this was clearly proved, would infallibly be considered as blinded by passion; and such a censure would soon become light to those who might have to bear it, inasmuch as it would be consciously and manifestly undeserved.

Let these illustrations be applied to the case before us. We argue thus, using for convenience the syllogistic form: God blames man for not being conformed to his will; but God blames no man unjustly; therefore, whatever is necessary to just blame must be found in the condition of man. The conclusion of this syllogism forms the first member of the next:—Whatever is necessary to just blame is found in the condition of man; but power over our actions is necessary to just blame; therefore, man has power over his actions.

Which of these positions or conclusions will be disputed the author cannot tell. To him it appears that the possession of power to do right is essential to the very possibility of doing wrong, and that, if man does not possess it, he can be guilty of no sin.

The opinion that blameworthiness towards God is a different thing from blameworthiness towards men, is without foundation. There is, and can be, but one set of ideas

suggested to our minds by this phrase and its kindred terms, sin, righteousness, condemnation, &c.; among these ideas that of the possession of power is always found, and it is inseparable from the rational use of the terms themselves. That God has used these terms knowing what meaning they conveyed to us, and knowing too that they could convey no other, is a fair argument that he intended them to convey these ideas; if he did not so intend them it would have been but reasonable that he should have given us his own explanation of them; and, if he has done neither the one nor the other, then he has left us altogether in the dark as to the meaning of his own words, with the additional evil of a powerful tendency to understand them in an inapplicable sense of our own. Will any friend of God be pleased with this alternative? Either he has thus uselessly spoken, or he has used words in their ordinary meaning; and if he has done the latter, the use of the words, sin, condemnation, &c., essentially implies the existence of the power contended for.

It has been said, that no doubt can be entertained by any man of his sinfulness, because his own conscience convicts him of it. This is true, and it bears directly upon the argument in hand; for the very reason why a man's conscience convicts him of sin is, that it also assures him of his power to avoid it. To this extent he always feels himself subject to blame, but no further. Persuade a man that in any given instance he has not the power of acting otherwise, and you immediately free him from all self-accusation in that respect. Hence there has arisen so marked a distinction as to the kinds of conduct for which men blame or justify themselves respectively. If a man commits a fraud he reproaches himself for it, for he feels it was a deliberate villany; but if he breaks into a rage, he says (though unjustly) I could not help it, it is my constitution—and he takes no blame. If you represent to him the state of his heart towards God, and attach censure there, you find that he uses the same weapon of defence with still greater force:—O! says he, that is natural to me, I cannot help that. A thousand such examples might be adduced, but these are sufficient to show that the reproofs of conscience are founded upon the conscious possession of power; and that, to whatever extent a man is really persuaded that he has not power to act differently, to the same extent he inevitably exempts himself from blame.

Some persons have satisfied themselves with saying, that men must feel themselves blameworthy, because they know they have sinned freely, or voluntarily. True; but what purpose does this statement serve? Suppose that men have this opinion of themselves; it must be either just, or unjust. If just, it must be founded on their power to act otherwise, which is essential to voluntary action, and which is all we have contended for; if unjust, it is only a fallacy of which they ought to be disabused. And what is the meaning, besides, of sinning, or doing anything else, voluntarily? It is to select one out of several things, any of which we might have chosen. If I have not power to act otherwise than I do, my actions are not free but constrained.

It would, after all, be much more candid if those who maintain that man has not power to avoid sin, would acknowledge that, according to their principle, the sinner loses his criminal character. They have excellent authority for doing so, no less than that of our Lord and Saviour himself. "If ye were blind," said he to the Pharisees, "ye should have no sin," John ix. 41: in other words, If you had not the means of doing right, you should not be charged with doing wrong. And, if this is the principle on which He proceeds in the distribution of blame, why should *we* be discontented with it? It is impossible to admit that sin is no fault, since the sentiment would subvert the whole fabric of the divine government, and turn the oracles of eternal wisdom into foolishness; then let the untenable notion of man's inability, which plainly involves this consequence, be at once, cordially, and for ever abandoned.

Some divines have shown so much candour as to allow this consequence in part. Admitting the general principle that God blames men for not doing only what they could do, and not what they could not do, and conceiving that men cannot do anything spiritually, but only externally good, they hold that men are not blameable for not doing spiritual things, such as believing in Christ.

It is pleasant to see the force of truth confessed in any measure by antagonists in argument, and we may fairly set this concession down as no trifling confirmation of the principle we have maintained, namely, that blameworthiness is commensurate with power. But to what an extraordinary position have our brethren thus been driven! There is

nothing blameable in any spiritual wickedness, they affirm, because man has no power to do anything spiritually good. By things spiritually good or evil, we suppose we are to understand things good or evil in disposition, or in the state of the heart; so that the idea entertained is, that there is no blameworthiness in any state of the heart, however evil. Wonderful conception! Nothing blameable in pride, lust, hatred, malice, revenge, love of sin, enmity to God, contempt of salvation, rejection of Christ, or in any of the dreadful evils of heart which might be added to the catalogue! What then is the Bible but a mass of awful fictions, falsely representing that on account of these things the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience? Is it not strange too, that, while there is no blameworthiness in these inward evils, there should be so much in the outward expression of them? There is harm, it seems, in fornication, but none in lasciviousness; it is censurable to strike a blow, but not so to be in a rage; it is wrong to commit sin, but not so to love it. Yet why should this be? Does not the law of God look into the inmost soul, and require purity there? Has not our Lord declared that whoso looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart; and the apostle, that whoso hateth his brother is a murderer? Matt. v. 28; 1 John iii. 15. Besides, if these outward acts of iniquity are held to be blameworthy, it must, upon the principles of our brethren themselves, be because they have power to avoid them: but what power has any man over his conduct, except by having power over his heart, out of which the conduct actually and inevitably springs? They seem startled by our maintaining that men can regulate their conduct by regulating their dispositions, but really it is we who have the greater cause to wonder, when we find them affirming that a man can regulate his conduct without regulating his dispositions. They would be hard task-masters, if the government of the world were in their hands. The yoke of our Maker is easy indeed in comparison with theirs.

Our readers will probably agree with us in thinking, that nothing can be more futile than the attempt to withdraw spiritual evils, that is, evils of the heart, from deserved blame. And, if they are deserving of blame, upon the principles of those with whom we are arguing, men must have power to avoid them; because, as they allow, God blames us

for not doing only what we have power to do. How delightful would it be to find persons of such amiable candour, and of clear views too to a certain extent, scattering, by a vigorous effort, the perplexities which yet surround them!

CHAPTER VI.

Whether the possession of power is not implied in the divine commands:—The argument from moral obligation.

It is an obvious but remarkable circumstance, that the same things which are described as wrought by the Holy Spirit, and as indispensably requiring his influence, are elsewhere made the subject of divine command, and enjoined upon men. "Repent, and be converted," said the apostles, Acts iii. 19. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts," said the prophets, Isa. lv. 7. "Come unto me," said the Saviour, Matt. xi. 28. "Wash thy heart from wickedness," said Jehovah, Jer. iv. 14. What are we to understand by this?

The issuing of commands is a thing of perpetual occurrence among men; but it implies always a peculiar condition in order to its propriety. One feature of this condition, and the only one immediately pertaining to our present argument, is, that the power of the persons commanded should be proportionate to the obedience required. This is a point of obvious and indispensable necessity. Whether it may be just or not that any commands at all should be addressed to me from a given quarter, it is at all events unjust that I should be commanded beyond my strength. It may be possible that all the power I have should be rightly at the disposal of another; but what would any one have more? Or what could a claim for more result in but absurdity and ridicule? Authority in him who commands, is strictly correlative to power in him who obeys. Who thinks of commanding the dead? Or of requiring the living to do what they have not power to do—the lame to walk, or the deaf to listen?

One would naturally infer, therefore, that when God, as a being of adorable justice, issues his commands, the very fact of his doing so implies an appropriate condition on the part of men, to whom they are addressed; they must have power to do whatever God enjoins upon them. To issue commands under any other circumstances is unjust and absurd, and cannot be ascribed to the Most Blessed.

Under the force of this obvious inference, some divines, deeming it indispensable to maintain human inability, have been led to abandon the obligation of the divine law; alleging that, as men cannot do what is enjoined, and God knows they cannot, so he does not expect they should; and that the only use of the law is to set forth God's rights and our sinfulness. Such is the force of system! With what eyes can these persons read the Bible? The commands of God are expressly and directly addressed to men, and they are worded in a way fully expressive of his will and authority: what could he have said more or otherwise, if he had intended them to have been obeyed? But the use of the law, we are told, is to set forth his rights. Yet what rights can he have irrespective of man's power? Rights of moral government are limited essentially to creatures capable of moral action, and can extend no further. Where there are no such creatures (and according to this view there are none upon earth), there no such government can be exercised, nor can any such rights exist.

In order to maintain the strange opinion, that God may justly command when we have not power to obey, it has been a favourite idea with some divines that there is something peculiar about his supremacy, which exempts it from the force of ordinary rules; and it has often been announced with oracular wisdom, as an axiom in a certain school of theology, that God's rights are not to be measured by our ability. We trust we have no desire to limit the Holy One of Israel. We desire to cherish an unfeigned joy in his supremacy and sovereignty. But God has limited himself by the very fact of establishing a moral government, a government of definite rules and principles, which he has shown no desire to violate; and he can feel himself little indebted, we apprehend, to those who have advocated his liberty to do so. He means to be a righteous judge; and if so, his commands must be proportionate to our power, whatever that power may be, or may become.

It is of no consequence at all *how* a change may have been wrought in the power possessed by me, whether by means blameable or otherwise, whether by another's conduct or my own, whether augmenting my power or diminishing it: the principle never can be departed from, that, such as my present power is, precisely such is my present obligation.

As to the other alleged use of the law upon the supposition of human inability, this is the strangest of all. It is to exhibit our sinfulness. But, on the above supposition, what sinfulness have I to be exhibited? If I had power, according to Christ's declaration, I should have sin; but, if I have no power I have no sin: so that, if the law exhibits me as a sinner, it exhibits what is not the fact, and stands in need of correction. To deny, therefore, that the law of God is given and intended as the rule of our obedience, is to deny its utility altogether. If it does not answer this purpose, it answers none; or only the mischievous one of ascribing to God rights which he does not possess, and to man iniquities of which he is not guilty.

It has been imagined by others, that the law may be considered as twofold, an internal and an external law, the letter and the spirit; the one enjoining outward actions, and the other referring to the state of the heart. The latter, or the spiritual part of the law, is supposed not to be addressed to men in a way of command; but only the former, or the outward precepts, which men, it is allowed, have power to fulfil. It is well that men are allowed to have power to do anything that God commands, for so far his ways will appear to be just. But we should like to know on what this distinction in the law is founded. The apostle affirms that the law itself is spiritual; and, although some of its requirements are of an outward kind, it contains many also that are strictly spiritual, and the state of the heart is pre-eminently regarded in all. Such, indeed, is the grand requirement in which the whole law is comprehended: "Thou shalt *love* the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself," Mark xii. 30, 31. It would appear also, that, if God may not command the state of the heart, he cannot effectually command anything, inasmuch as all external actions originate and take their character from it. It is in the heart, in truth, as we have already shown, that the right and the wrong of every action essentially lies; and, if God has not

aimed his law at the heart, he has passed by the only part of our nature to which it is applicable at all.

If this were not enough, we should like to know how a man can have power to perform things outwardly right, but not inwardly so. Outward actions are not such as are commanded, unless they are performed in the spirit which is commanded, every precept requiring an internal as well as an external conformity. Besides, there is no way of regulating the outward conduct, but by first regulating the heart. A man's power over his actions consists in his power over his heart; destroy this, and the other instantly expires.

As the very fact of the Divine Being issuing his commands seems to demonstrate the existence of a corresponding power of obeying them, so this argument will be greatly strengthened by considering the awful consequences which he attaches to disobedience: a topic to be pursued in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

Whether the possession of power be not implied in the distribution of rewards and punishments:—The argument from human responsibility.

We referred at the close of the preceding chapter to the consequences which it has pleased the Most High to connect with the violation of his commandments. As he has issued a law to be obeyed, so he has appointed a day in which he will judge the world, Acts xvii. 31. "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad," 2 Cor. v. 10.

This part of the divine administration is evidently pervaded by a general principle of great importance, namely, that God holds men answerable to him for their conduct; and doubtless, if he does so at all, he does so with justice. But, in order to just responsibility, there is required a peculiar and corresponding condition in the parties held

responsible. No man holds *all* other men to be responsible to him; why does he hold *any* to be so? Plainly because of some peculiarity in their condition. In such a condition the possession of power is a uniform and essential element. A person may be my servant, and therefore I may consider him answerable to me for the occupation of his time; but, if his capacity of labour is taken away, his responsibility no longer exists. The allotment of praise and blame, of punishment and reward, proceeds universally upon this principle, so far as it is acknowledged to be just; every deviation from it is an admitted instance of partiality, wickedness, or folly.

The application of these remarks to the divine government will lead us to a very easy and obvious conclusion. The Almighty holds men responsible to him for their conduct; but power over our own conduct is necessary to just responsibility; therefore men have power over their own conduct.

An imagined necessity of maintaining human inability has induced an unwillingness to admit this reasoning. It is alleged that the subject, like many others, is mysterious, and that we should not pry into such profound investigations.

Undoubtedly many subjects are mysterious, and it is both our duty and our interest not to push inquiry where God checks it. But upon what authority is the responsibility of man ranked among the mysteries of religion?

Certainly no question can be more important, or more conducive to practical purposes, than this:—On what ground does God hold me answerable for my conduct? Nor can there be a question better entitled to a plain and convincing reply. Upon the answer to such an inquiry, the complexion of a man's feelings in reflecting upon his own character obviously depends. If the censure which attaches to him be apparently unjust, or if the justice of it be hidden among divine mysteries, he may be assured, indeed, of condemnation before God, but he cannot feel any condemnation of himself. Humiliation, shame, or penitential sorrow, can spring from nothing but such justice in his condemnation as he himself can understand; and, if these be of any excellency or importance, it is equally important, not merely that our responsibility should be just, but that its justice should be apparent to ourselves. A shadow upon this topic darkens every other; since our views of divine mercy, our joy in salvation, our grateful devotedness, all and every part of Christian char-

acter, will bear a proportion to the justice we discern in our condemnation. It ought, therefore, to be with every man a matter of the utmost anxiety to have clear views on this point. Not that we should be unwilling to leave in mystery what God has placed there, but it is yet to be proved that he has withdrawn the grounds of our responsibility from our cognizance; and when we think of their obvious and fundamental importance, it may be deemed almost, if not altogether, incredible that he should have done so.

This is the less to be supposed, because responsibility is not by any means a mysterious subject in itself. We are in the habit continually of holding each other responsible, and of allotting most readily both praise and censure, punishment and reward. The principles on which we do this are perfectly simple and obvious; and there is a natural and irresistible tendency to apply them to the divine conduct, as well as to our own. God has made use of our own language in this respect, and has given us reason to suppose, therefore, that he entertains similar ideas, and acts on similar principles; otherwise his declarations are calculated to mislead. If, when he speaks of righteous judgment, he does not mean the same as we do when using the same terms, the language, at best, is useless. What else does he mean? Only give such an unintelligible character to scriptural phraseology generally, and the value of the Bible is utterly destroyed.

And why should the principle which regulates human conduct not be applied to the divine? Is there any essential difference between the relations we bear to each other and those we bear to our Maker? He calls them by the very same names. "If I be a father," says he, "where is mine honour: if I be a master, where is my fear?" Mal. i. 6. Does he profess to act upon principles different from ours? So far from it, that he draws illustrations from our own conduct to convict us of sin against himself; and even calls us in to be judges in the controversy which he maintains with men. "Judge, I pray you, between me and my vineyard: what could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done to it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" Isa. v. 3, 4. Nay, he frames his very law by the same rule; "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength," Mark xii. 30.

The import of the last quoted passage is especially worthy of observation. Upon a careful perusal of it, the reader will clearly see that the law of God, in its utmost latitude and in its highest interpretation, demands nothing more than our "strength;" and that God himself—not man—has made this the exact measure and standard of his requirements. It is, moreover, evident from the language here employed, that our Maker considers our strength for the performance of what he requires to lie in the possession of our intelligent faculties; in strict accordance with which idea, he calls upon us to love him "with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind." An opinion has been entertained in some quarters, that this declaration of God's law was given only for our first parents, who had strength equal to its performance, while their depraved descendants have not. We conceive, however, that the words of our Lord above quoted contain the law given to man depraved, as well as to man in innocence. If they do not, then the law of God must have undergone a change with the condition of man: and we ask, What change? And what is the law now? And where are the scriptural authorities for such a view? We know of none, nor can we conceive that any serious attempt will be made to maintain such a position. But, if this be the law as now given to us, let it be observed that it takes for the measure of its demands, not the strength of our first parents, or of a state of innocence, but our actual and present strength: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God *with all thy strength.*" Such is its language to every individual; and this language demonstrates that its demand varies with all variations of strength, if such there be, and that it makes the strength of every man the measure of the obedience which God requires from him.

But suppose this is not held to be the principle of the divine government, and that, in relation to God, a man is to be blamed for doing what he had not power to avoid, or for doing what he had not power to perform; suppose it admitted that God's right to command is not proportionate to man's ability to obey, and that he exacts labour beyond our strength; the justice of all which is to be consigned (as well it may) to mystery now, and to be cleared up, if it ever can be cleared up, at a future period:—what is the consequence of this? We inevitably associate the character

of the Most Blessed with what is evil and base in our estimation; we place him in the same rank with unreasonable and cruel men, with unrighteous and merciless taskmasters, and even with the cruel monarch whose similar conduct, in requiring bricks without straw, once aroused the indignant vengeance of Heaven itself. We set up religion in direct opposition to the common sense and indestructible sentiments of mankind. We tell them what they never can believe, and what, if they could believe it, would only increase their enmity to God; what is adapted to attach scorn to professions of justice, and to turn declarations of mercy into ridicule. That these effects are not produced in pious minds we allow, but they are produced to a most deplorable extent in the minds of the ungodly; they naturally and justly follow from the premises, and not at all the less so because they are left to slumber in some persons under the general plea that the subject is mysterious. We maintain that it is not at all mysterious, and should be greatly astonished indeed if the Almighty had left in mystery anything by which his name could be so dishonoured. The mysteries of religion are things above reason, not things contrary to it; nor can they be so, for none such are there in religion to conceal. We can conceive no argument to be plainer or more decisive than this: God holds us justly responsible; proportionate power is necessary to just responsibility; therefore we have power to be and to do all that for which God holds us responsible.

If we examine the nature of the power which is considered necessary to just responsibility among men, we shall find it to be precisely that which we all possess in relation to God. It is the possession of means. A man is blamed or punished for not paying his debts, who has the means of doing so, that is, money, within his reach; and the same in every other case. According to the view we have taken of the structure and operation of the mind, we have the means of being all that God expects us to be; or, in other words, we have the power of being so. Taking, therefore, the same ground which satisfies every one of the justice of responsibility among men, we find justice equally manifest in our responsibility to God: why should anything additional be desired in this case? Are we dissatisfied with this state of things?

The argument we have just drawn from the principle of responsibility is greatly strengthened by adverting to the

awful magnitude of the consequences which the Supreme Governor has attached to disobedience. In a case in which the result in suspense was trivial, it might be less material to be scrupulous about the principle. But in the case before us the issue is most momentous. The futurity which is to be decided according to our present conduct comprehends by far the most important portion of our being, its highest joys and its deepest sorrows; they are joys and sorrows for the description of which all sources of earthly illustration have been employed, nay, they have been exhausted, and yet they have proved inadequate; they are to be imparted by God's own hand, then unrestrained, and acting with an energy altogether beyond conception; and finally, they are to be perpetual, admitting throughout all eternity of no change but augmentation, according to their respective natures. Is the ground upon which I am subjected to one of the alternatives of such a destiny to be concealed from me?

Nor is this all. In the infliction of indignation so terrible upon his creatures, it is of the utmost moment that the character of God should be cleared of every dark suspicion, by a most vivid and irresistible conviction in the mind of every sinner of the justice of his doom. To imagine that, when such issues as these are suspended on the event, God should have so trifled with his immortal creatures as to say I will deal with you according to your character, when they have no power to form that character to good or ill, is afflictive beyond all sufferance; nor can a sentiment which involves this consequence ultimately stand. "For then how shall God judge the world?" Rom. iii. 6.

It has sometimes been conceived sufficient to say, that the supposed mystery attending the responsibility of man will be cleared up hereafter, and that no doubt will be entertained of it at the judgment day. Most unquestionably this is a truth; but a truth which no way tends to lessen the importance of satisfactory information on the same subject now. The justice of his responsibility is a thing which obviously should be made apparent to a sinner, not merely at the time of his punishment, to silence him in his sufferings, but during the period of his probation, to quicken him in his escape. To suppose knowledge communicated then which is not accessible now, is to suppose the existence of a new case, in which no probation is granted, but in which punishment

is inflicted without opportunity of reformation. It would enable a sinner to say, If I could have known this before, I might have been a different man: whereas the equitable character of the final judgment evidently lies in its simply carrying out the principles of the probationary state, and rewarding every man according to that which he might have known, in order to determine the character of that which he was doing. We have no need to hesitate in saying, therefore, that the grounds exhibited as those of our responsibility hereafter must be precisely the same as those exhibited now; and that, if the subject be mysterious in this world, it can receive no satisfactory elucidation in the next.

Another method by which it has been conceived reconcilable with common sense that God should so awfully punish men for not doing what they have not power to do, is by such a statement as follows:—although man has not power to repent, God is willing to give him power, having promised to impart his Holy Spirit to them that ask it. Now, it is continued, man has power to ask for the Spirit, and he ought to pray for it, in which case he would have power bestowed for all the rest of his duty.

Without in the first instance impugning the ground on which it rests, I observe that the preceding statement is liable to several objections.

It proceeds upon the assumption of a totally inadmissible principle, namely, that repentance may be a sinner's duty at the time that he has not power to repent. If power should be imparted, whether by the Holy Spirit or in any other method, then unquestionably it might be his duty; but this idea of praying for power to perform a duty implies that the obligation exists before the power is received, which we conceive to be impossible and absurd.

This assumption is also contradicted by a part of the statement itself. A man can pray, it is alleged, and therefore he ought to pray, and will be justly blameable if he do not. Most admirable and undeniable! But the converse surely follows, that, as man cannot repent, he is under no obligation to repent, and for impenitence is liable to no condemnation. Else it might be equally affirmed that men ought to pray though they could not pray, which this hypothesis very carefully and very wisely avoids. Yet why should

we be more willing to say that they ought to repent when they cannot repent, than that they ought to pray when they cannot pray? Is not the principle in both cases the same? The statement shows an apparent desire to avoid this inconsistency; yet by this very principle it destroys itself. Indeed, error is always a suicide.

Further, upon the hypothesis under consideration, the direct and immediate obligation of a sinner is to pray, and not to repent, or to turn to God, or to believe in Christ: for all which he has no power, and which, therefore, it were vain to attempt. His direct and immediate duty is merely to pray that power may be given him for these ends. We conceive this to be an unwarrantable deviation from the address of the Gospel. We know, indeed, that Simon was exhorted to pray, but it was for pardon of sin, not for the Holy Spirit; and besides, the encouragement to pray came after an exhortation to repent: see Acts viii. 22. And this is the uniform address of the Gospel. "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted. Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent. Repent ye, and believe the Gospel." Acts iii. 19; Luke xiii. 3; Acts xvii. 30; Mark i. 15. This is required of sinners as their first and immediate duty, without the intervention of any other act. The address of our brethren, however, must be of a totally different kind. It must be to this effect: "We do not exhort you to repentance, or conversion, or faith in Christ, because you have not power to comply; but we exhort you to pray. You *can* pray. Pray, therefore, for the Holy Spirit to enable you to repent." Now we ask where is the pattern of this address in the Holy Scriptures? Or, if there be none, by what authority is it introduced, to modify and supersede the wisdom and power of God? Can anything more effectually condemn a hypothesis than its compelling its advocates to abandon so principal a feature of the Divine Word? This, verily, is "another Gospel."

But let us look yet a little more narrowly at that which a sinner, on this supposition, is exhorted to do. He is urged to pray; for what? Not for pardon, nor deliverance from the wrath to come; nor for peace of conscience, nor purity of heart; but for power. For *power?* Why, power is the very thing which creates both his responsibility and his danger,

and is the last thing in the world which a wicked man would wish to possess. Nothing can be more gratifying to him than to learn that he has no power to repent, since he may then be quite certain that it cannot be his duty, and that the neglect of it cannot expose him to equitable condemnation. This is just as he would have it; and, if you tell him that in a certain quarter he may obtain power, his reply might naturally be, "I would rather not obtain it; it would impose upon me new duties, and create responsibilities which I am truly happy to avoid." This strange notion, therefore, first makes it dependent upon man himself whether he will have power or not, then leaves to a sinner, who will never pray for power, the gratification of excluding himself from ever being answerable to God for his impenitence.

But we have not yet done. We should like to know upon what grounds it is affirmed that a sinner can pray. Any prayer, in the sense intended, must be in spirit and in truth; it must express the state of the heart. Now such a state of heart as would be expressed in prayer for the Holy Spirit, would certainly be totally dissimilar to the ordinary and previous state of a sinner's mind. If he has power to pray for the Spirit, therefore, he has power to produce this change in the state of his mind. But this change is of the same nature, and is as great in degree, as that implied in repenting of sin and turning to God; and, if a sinner has power for the one, how has he not power for the other?

It requires to be asked, moreover, whether sinners really have power to pray. We, of course, believe that they have; but we are convinced that they have it in no other sense than that in which they have also power to repent. The passages of Scripture and other arguments which are brought to show that men have not power to repent, would equally demonstrate that they have not power to pray. "Without me," says our Lord, "ye can do *nothing*" (John xv. 5). Why is prayer made an exception to this declaration? In the very same sense in which men cannot repent, they cannot pray; the hindrances to both are precisely of the same character, and of equally certain operation; nor can it be less derogatory to the Holy Spirit to imagine that men can pray without his aid, than to say that they can repent without it. In affirming that men can pray, our brethren are guilty of the same violations of Scripture, the same incon-

sistencies, and other evils, which are charged upon us in saying that men can repent; they cannot, therefore, reasonably accuse us, nor do we attempt to criminate them. We believe the doctrine of man's entire ability for his duty to harmonize with the whole of Scripture; and they, who admit it in one point, without answering the end they desire, may just as easily, and much more satisfactorily, admit it in all.

On the ground of the alleged encouragement to a sinner to pray for the Holy Spirit, it has been further said, in reference to the commands of God, that man is not called to obey them in his own strength; and hence it is inferred that the utterance of commands does not necessarily imply the existence of power to fulfil them.

This singular representation seems liable to insuperable objections.

In the first place it is obvious that the commands of God are addressed to man as he is, and not to man as he is not. If otherwise, then they are not addressed to man at all, but to some other being; nor can they ever have any bearing upon him, but on the supposition of his coming sometime into the state of superadded strength which they contemplate. It seems evident, however, that no such qualification as this is attached to any of God's commandments. They are uniformly addressed to man as he is, without the slightest intimation that obedience is not required until he obtains additional power to obey; on the contrary, their obligation begins from the moment they are understood, while every act of disobedience is reckoned a sin, and will meet its reward. If man is not called to obey in his own strength, he should not be required to obey while he has no strength but his own; the additional strength which obedience requires should be issued simultaneously with the command. But neither is this the case; since it is manifest that the commands of God are laid upon men for a long period before the Holy Spirit, which is supposed to convey the additional strength, is communicated. Besides, if God does not call men to obey in their own strength, then the strength which he requires them to use should be communicated by him unsought, and not merely promised in answer to their request. In cases in which that strength is never given, it follows that he never calls for obedience at all. The only thing which, upon this

principle, he can be said to require, is prayer, and prayer for strength; an exercise which is never enjoined (though many other things are which this imagination supersedes), and which, moreover, is quite as much beyond our own strength as any other spiritual exercise, and ought as little to be required until the additional strength is given which we are thus expected to seek. It may be added, that the objection quite overlooks the fact which we have elsewhere noticed, that God actually makes our own strength the measure of his demands; for thus it stands in the grand expression of his law, and the same qualification doubtless attaches to every individual precept of it, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy strength." And if the whole that he requires be that to which our own strength is competent, why should he wait for our obedience till we acquire more strength than our own?

In the next place, we do not see how the kindness of God in encouraging us to pray for his Holy Spirit could countenance the idea that he does not call us to obey in our own strength. For, in truth, the operation of the blessed Spirit has no relation to our strength, but solely to our disposition. Our strength to do the will of God consists in the possession of our rational faculties, which we have independently of gracious influence; that which hinders us is a wrong disposition, and for the correction of this the Spirit's aid would be implored. His object is not to impart strength, but to inspire resolution; so that, even if it were true (which it is not) that God does not require us to obey without the Spirit, still it could not be said that he calls for no obedience in our own strength. Even when he gives the Spirit, he gives no more strength; and if, therefore, we are ever called upon to obey his will, in our own strength, and in that alone, it must be. Besides, if we were to pray for the help of the Spirit in order that we might obey our Maker's commands, what would this very act and attitude imply? Surely, that obedience to these commands was our duty, whether we obtain the aid that we seek or not. If it were not our duty, why should we seek help to perform it? Our doing so seems clearly to indicate that we have felt ourselves called upon to render obedience before we came to the throne of grace; but, if it be true that we are not called upon to obey while we have only our own strength, then we have been labouring under a

delusion, and ought rather to return from the mercy-seat with this consolation, that, until strength is given, we are not expected to obey.

In the preceding remarks, we have not directly denied that God has encouraged sinners universally to pray for the Holy Spirit. I come now to call in question this assertion. It seems to me rather, that the references to prayer in the Sacred Oracles are discriminating. As I have stated my sentiments on this point in a mode which satisfies me in a tract which I have published,* I use the freedom of making an extract from it here.

"All encouragement held out in the Scriptures to approach to God is through the atonement and mediation of Christ. So says our Divine Lord himself:—'Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father *in my name*, he will give it you,' John xv. 16. 'For *through him* we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father,' Eph. ii. 18. 'Therefore, *being justified by faith*, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith unto this grace wherein we stand,' Rom. v. 1, 2. It is a most blessed truth that *through Christ* there is access to God for the vilest of sinners; but the Word of God says nothing of a welcome in any other way; and if so, then there is no welcome for impenitent sinners. They have not believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, but are at this moment rejecting him, whatever words of prayer they may employ: if, therefore, they find access to God, it must be in some way of which the Gospel knows nothing, and in some way, moreover, which tends to depreciate, if not to supersede, the atoning work of the Son of God.

"The language of the Sacred Scriptures respecting prayer is clearly discriminating. It is by no means intimated that whoever prays shall be heard; on the contrary, we have certain characters pointed out whose prayers shall not be heard. Consider seriously the following passages:—'The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination to the Lord,' Prov. xv. 8. 'When ye spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers I will not hear,' Isa. i. 15. 'Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and put the stumbling-block of their iniquity before

* On Prayer, 32mo.

their face; should I be inquired of at all by them?' Ezek. xiv. 3. 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me,' Psalm lxvi. 18. 'Ye ask, and have not, because ye ask amiss, that ye might consume it upon your lusts,' James iv. 3. No language can more clearly describe the character of an impenitent sinner than that used in several of these passages; and we are distinctly told, that, should he make many prayers, the Lord will not hear. As to the words of our Lord, Matt. vii. 7–11, 'Ask, and it shall be given you,' &c., the context determines them to refer only to the children of God, or to those who can look up to him as their 'Father who is in heaven,' see ver. 11. It is clearly, therefore, to be set down as a principle, that not every one who prays will be heard, but only those who pray in the attitude in which God has promised to hear."

I cannot but regard this as the true doctrine of Holy Writ; according to those memorable and important words of the Saviour, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me," John xiv. 6.

To this I think it may be added, that the supposition of an unconverted sinner praying for the Holy Spirit is altogether out of nature and possibility. A desire after the renewing influence of the Spirit is desire after a holy object, and for a holy purpose; a desire which cannot be conceived of as existing in an unholy heart. The object supposed to be sought by an unconverted sinner, is one to which, while unconverted, he is intensely averse; and to conceive of him as imploring it is to delude ourselves with an imagination untrue and impossible. The desires which are sometimes (either in reality or in pretence) so numerous in the heart of an unconverted sinner are not desires after the Holy Spirit. He who truly desires so holy a blessing can be nothing short of a converted man.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the divine use of means independently of the Holy Spirit:—The argument from the limited communication of the Spirit.

We have already adverted to the fact, that what is ascribed to the operation of the Holy Spirit on the one hand, is, on the other, enjoined upon man as his duty; and hence we have inferred the power of man to perform it. But we may go further than this. God has not only issued commands; he has also used a variety of means to induce us to comply with them. Of this character are the invitations and promises, the warnings and threatenings, the doctrines and examples, contained in Holy Scripture; all of them being addressed to the understanding, and in some way or other appealing to the heart, and constituting together an immense apparatus of motive and persuasion. Many of these portions of Holy Writ are unquestionably directed specifically to ungodly men, and, by showing the necessity, reasonableness, importance, and blessedness of conversion, are adapted to lead men to repentance. Such passages are also, obviously, of no limited application, but are addressed to sinners generally, and therefore to sinners universally; so that, wherever the knowledge of the Gospel comes, a system of persuasive means is immediately put into operation upon every person of sane mind.

This system of means does not imply, or comprehend, any communication of the Holy Spirit to the parties on whom it bears. Some, indeed, have conceived that there is a dispensation of the Spirit co-extensive with the means of religious knowledge, a measure of his blessed influence being given to every man to make the best use of it for his own welfare; a sentiment of which, after the notice we have taken of it,* we need only say, that we see in it neither doctrinal truth nor practical value. On the contrary, we apprehend that, as, on the one hand, the Scriptures declare the influence of the Spirit to be productive of the fruits of

* Pages 27, 28.

the Spirit; so, on the other, the measure in which such fruits are actually produced clearly and indubitably defines the extent to which his influences have been received. If this be the case, the communication of the Spirit is not universal, even where Gospel privileges are enjoyed; since it is manifest that not all who enjoy them are converted to God. In such circumstances, however, the use of means is still universal; since the truths of God's Word which are adapted to lead to repentance bear upon every man alike. Hence, therefore, it appears that the communication of the Spirit and the use of means are not co-extensive; and that, while there is one portion of mankind who enjoy both these favours, there is another who possess only one of them, namely, the means of persuasion, without the influences of the Holy Spirit.

Let us dwell for a moment upon this state of things, remembering that it is no accident, no mistake; that it is not found where diverse agencies might have given rise to unexpected incongruities; but that it exists in the administration of God himself, and therefore is stamped with the previous knowledge, deliberate design, and perfect wisdom, which characterize all his works.

To what circumstances, then, is the use of means adapted or appropriate? Clearly, to none but those in which there is an apparent possibility of their success. In sickness, for example, it is a general maxim, that while there is life there is hope; and physicians accordingly continue their exertions, with however little expectation of a cure, till a patient expires; but was any one ever so absurd as to perpetuate the use of means after it was ascertained that life was extinct? So accurately is the principle acted upon, as to establish some remarkable exceptions to the general rule; inasmuch as in cases of pulmonary consumption, for instance, it is now known that, after a certain point of its progress, recovery is hopeless, and at that point the application of all medicines is suspended, excepting such as may mitigate sufferings which death alone can terminate. To every case of the employment of means the same principle extends; and, if there be any readers of this book who would not feel themselves guilty of absurdity in making efforts for an object when they knew there was no possibility of success, they, but they alone, may deny the conclusion to which we are tending.

If a possibility of success be necessary to the appropriate use of means in the abstract, it must be so whether those means be employed by human agents or divine: the objects contemplated may differ, and the means devised; but the principle of the practicability of the end by the means is alike essential to the wisdom of both. But, if this be the case, it inevitably follows that it is possible for sinners to be converted by the means instituted for this end, namely, by means of persuasion without the influence of the Holy Spirit; otherwise God would have resorted to the use of means without propriety or wisdom, which is not to be supposed.

Should any reader here be startled by recollecting how expressly our Lord declares this to be impossible, the author begs to refer to a following chapter, in which the meaning of that and its kindred terms will be fully, and he hopes candidly, investigated. At present let the train of reasoning which is before us be frankly pursued, and, if the idea is to be retained that the Almighty is attempting to accomplish by the use of persuasion what it is impossible so to achieve, let us fairly observe the attitude in which we place him. We set his administration in this respect on a level with absurd and irrational actions. It is like the conduct of a man who should exhaust his wealth upon speculations from which he knew he could derive no return—a wasteful expenditure of his resources. It is like the effort of a man attempting to lift a mountain in his hand—a ridiculous application of his strength. It is like reasoning with the wind, or expostulating with a stone. Can any one think thus of his Maker?

The difficulty of entertaining such ideas has led some to imagine, that God never intended the means he has employed to answer the end for which they are apparently designed; an opinion which has been strengthened by the sentiment, that none of God's designs can fail of their accomplishment. Of this argument we shall speak presently; let us first observe the extraordinary predicament into which it brings the adorable Being on whose behalf it is produced.

We are to conceive, then, that the blessed God uses means adapted to an end, without any design to accomplish that end. Now it may be observed, in the first place, that this immediately stultifies our ordinary modes of reasoning. When we see a person adopting means conducive to an end, we uniformly and inevitably conclude that he designs to

accomplish that end, or at least to do something towards it; thus, when a man excavates the ground, and collects bricks or other materials, can any body help concluding that he intends to build? We have no method of judging of the intentions of others so certain as the tendency and adaptation of their actions; and if it be of any importance at all to ascertain the designs of God, as in some respects we suppose it is, we can scarcely avoid estimating them by the same rule. Or, secondly, if the designs of God may not be inferred from the adaptation of his actions, it attaches a melancholy stigma to his character. A man who makes preparation as though he meant to do one thing, and all the while means to do another, either does not know his own mind, or he proceeds in a way of concealment and deceit;—he is either a fool or a knave. If, as we most deeply feel, such imputations must be infinitely remote from the Most High, must not such conduct also? It is certain, at all events, that, in instituting means for the conversion of sinners, he *seems* to have this design; it is certain, too, that, as he has constituted us to infer design from the apparent tendency of actions, he knows we shall conceive him to have this design; and if it shall ultimately turn out that he had no such design, what can possibly result from the institution of these means, but delusion to us and mockery to himself?

Besides, look at the nature and extent of the means themselves. How solemnly and awfully he speaks! With what a vehemence of affection and importunity he pleads! From what a compass the topics are adduced which are employed to persuade, and how much do they comprehend of the most attractive and the most terrible that can appeal to the heart of man! Think of the patience, the perseverance, the solicitude, with which all these means are employed, while God himself looks on, with urgent yet suspended wrath, saying, "How shall I make thee as Admah, and set thee as Zeboim!" Could he have done more if he really had intended to persuade?

Nor should we forget that criminality is attached to the failure of the means employed. If the Almighty had not intended them as means of conversion, one would think he could find little cause of complaint in the fact that none yield to the employment of them. Why is he angry at this, if he never meant them for this end? He *is* angry, never-

theless, with the wicked every day, and, "if he turn not, he will whet his sword," Ps. vii. 12. When "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire," it will be to "take vengeance on them that obey not the Gospel," 2 Thess. i. 8. But why, if the Gospel was not meant to be obeyed? The displeasure of God surely can have no foundation but the contradiction of his will, and no measure but the degree in which sinners have been guilty of it. Whatever justice or reasonableness there is admitted to be, therefore, in the punishment of the impenitent, there is just as much proof of the intention of God that they should repent at his call.

But none of the designs of God, it is replied, can be frustrated; and so, for the thousandth time, is an apparent truth converted into a real error.

There are two characters, or capacities, in which God acts: in the one he appears as a sovereign agent, accomplishing his own pleasure; in the other as a moral governor, submitting himself, within certain limits, to the pleasure of others. The latter idea is necessarily involved in the creation of rational beings, who may or may not honour their Maker, by obeying his commands, or accomplishing his will. There is manifestly, therefore, a wide difference between the legislative will of God and his absolute will; between his design respecting what others should do, and his design respecting what he will do himself. The accomplishment of the latter is absolutely certain, the former is liable to frustration. And this state of things involves no dishonour to God; because, whatever the conduct of his creatures may be, however they may choose to disobey and dishonour him, there are ultimate measures of retribution by which his name and glory will be fully vindicated.

Seeing, therefore, that there is a most just and important sense in which it may be affirmed that God's will may be resisted, and his designs frustrated, namely, in reference to the whole of his legislative administration, it may correctly be maintained to be his will that men should repent at his call, even though none of them do so. No other part of his will is frustrated herein, than such as the very nature of his government renders liable to frustration.

It may perhaps be conceived, that the fact that none are converted without the influence of the Spirit—a fact which the

author most fully and unequivocally maintains—authorizes the inference that the means were not intended for their apparent end. Would the Almighty, it may be said, institute a magnificent apparatus as means of conversion, by which he foreknew that none would be converted?

This question involves a principle which applies to all instances of probationary administration. Can it be wise, and worthy of God, to make an experiment which he knows will fail? Let his own conduct answer. The experiment made with our first parents in the garden of Eden was just such a one; yet he did make it, and he may, therefore, make another on a similar principle. Or let the nature of the case answer. May there not be other results for the production of which the experiment may be worth while, although that particular result should not arise? He must have great confidence in his own judgment who would undertake to answer this question in the negative; and until it is so answered upon sufficient authority, the way is quite open for conceiving that God may have instituted means for conversion, and may have intended them as such, although no sinner should be converted by them.

We might ask, indeed, if the invitations and warnings of Holy Writ were not intended as means of conversion, for what they were intended. The importance of answering this question has been felt by those who hold the opinion we are combating, but it seems to have been found somewhat difficult to answer it satisfactorily. It is, we are told, to leave sinners without excuse. Strange assertion! It is then to be supposed, that, if it were not for the warnings and invitations of the Gospel, sinners would have an excuse for their sins! This is a startling proposition to set out with; but it is nothing to what follows, namely, that the Gospel is given to take this excuse away, and for no other end! If this be the case, it must be confessed that the Gospel has been grievously misunderstood. It has been imagined to have an aspect of favour, to come with a message of mercy, to be glad tidings of great joy, the grace of God bringing salvation; but, according to this notion, it brings nothing but guilt, misery, and wrath. Before it comes men have a valid excuse for their sins, one which makes it impossible for God to punish them justly, and which will certainly exempt them, therefore, from any punishment at all: but,

after the Gospel comes, this excuse is taken away; then they begin to be chargeable with guilt and liable to misery, and the publication of the Gospel is a mere contrivance of his, that he might be able justly to condemn those whom he had already determined to destroy.

Scarcely less extraordinary is the method by which the sinner's excuse is to be taken away. If, indeed, he being already guilty and exposed to ruin, a door of hope is really set before him, then he will have no excuse if he should ultimately perish; and this is exactly the state of things for which we contend. But nothing of this sort is admitted by our companions in argument. They will have the sinner's excuse taken away without salvation having been put into his power; as though the semblance of it were enough to ensure this melancholy end, and the whole affair were characterized by a systematic hypocrisy, which it is astonishing that any man could devise, and yet more astonishing that any man could attribute to his Maker.

The truth which we have thus been endeavouring to establish is, that the warnings and invitations of the Gospel are used by the Almighty as sincere means of conversion. If this be admitted, we conceive it to follow that those whom means are used to bring to repentance have power to repent, the use of means being otherwise absurd.

To what has been said we may add, that the means employed possess a perfect and manifest adaptation to the faculties of man, irrespectively of the influence of the Holy Spirit. We have seen that man's heart is wrought upon by means of the understanding, according to the tendency of the objects presented to it; and we find that the means instituted by God for the conversion of sinners are in perfect accordance with this constitution, and require nothing more to give them adaptation. He presents to the understanding truths adapted and sufficient to induce repentance; and, according to the structure of the mind, the consideration of those truths would infallibly lead to the result they are adapted to produce. The apparatus, therefore, is framed without a regard to the influence of the Holy Spirit. As a system of means, it is perfect and complete without such an appendage, and it is sure of success by itself, unless some cause prevents the natural and ordinary action of the mind.

The opinion that a measure of the Spirit's influence is given to every man who comes within the knowledge of the Gospel, has arisen from a conviction of the necessity of admitting power in man, as well as the use of means by God; but, as man is conceived by this school of divines to have no power of himself, it must be given to him, and hence the hypothesis of the universal dispensation of the Spirit. With regard to this scheme of doctrine, we might well be content with the testimony which it bears to the general principle we have advocated; but we may observe in passing, that, if the constitution of our intelligent and moral nature be such as has been described, the supposition of the universal influence of the Spirit is altogether needless. It is conceived only to put a man into such a condition of strength, that, as to religion, he may do what he pleases; but in the very same condition we have shown man to be without supernatural aid. To what end, therefore, is the introduction of an agent in this respect unnecessary?

CHAPTER IX.

Whether the Holy Spirit is a gift of justice, or of grace:—The argument from the gracious and sovereign character of the Holy Spirit.

Having contemplated the condition of those to whom God does not impart the influences of his Spirit, let us briefly survey that of the more favoured portion of mankind on whom this inestimable blessing is bestowed. Judging by the fruits, there are manifestly some into whose hearts this divine agent is commissioned to enter. In what light are we led by the Oracles of Truth to regard this gift? If the communication of the Spirit is necessary to impart power to men to perform their duty, then we may expect to find it spoken of as a matter of equitable administration, as a thing due to men, inasmuch as there can be no equitable responsibility without commensurate power: but, if we should find it described as altogether a matter of grace and favour, and

one respecting which God acts according to his sovereign pleasure, then we may not unreasonably conclude that it is not necessary to the just responsibility, or to the power, of man. An examination of the Holy Scriptures will readily decide this question.

The gift of the Holy Spirit, we apprehend, is invariably spoken of as an act of rich and boundless grace.

1. This may be inferred from the passages which represent mankind in their natural state, and independently of any communication of the Spirit, as in a state of entire unworthiness and just condemnation, Rom. i. 18, *et seq.* ii. *passim:* so that any good thing given them must be of mercy, or free favour. But the Holy Spirit is not only a good thing, but one of the best things which the eternal Father has to bestow; wherefore it is of grace.

2. It appears also from the fact, that the gift of the Spirit is a part of the work of redemption; which is uniformly represented as originating in the free grace of God alone, and as characterized by it in all its parts. Now, if the gift of the Spirit be a part of this dispensation, it must partake of its general and essential character of grace.

3. The same conclusion may be drawn from the connexion which exists between the gift of the Spirit and the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is one of the fruits of his death, and could not otherwise have been bestowed, Gal. iii. 13, 14. But the gift of his Son is declared to be the very highest expression of the Father's love to a guilty world, John iii. 16, a gift as free as wonderful; and such, therefore, must be the character of every other gift which comes through this channel of mercy.

4. The discrimination and sovereignty which appear in the dispensation of the Spirit lead us to the same result. Whatever is necessary to the power of men to act a right part in their present state of being, God has dispensed universally, with an equal, that is, an equitable hand; all that may be given to men over and above this measure of good, he considers as subject to his unequal and discretionary distribution, in relation to which, while he gives to every man severally as he will, he says to every other man, "Friend, I do thee no wrong; may I not do what I will with mine own?" Matt. xx. 13. No conclusion can be more easy or more safe, therefore, than this; that, respecting whatever gift the

blessed God uses sovereignly, giving it to some and not to others, that gift is not necessary to the power of man to secure his own welfare. It is plain, however, that God has used sovereignty in the gift of his Spirit, which is imparted to some and not to others; wherefore we maintain that the gift of the Spirit is not necessary to man's power for his duty.

5. Love, or kindness, is declared, also, to be the prevailing motive and character of the Spirit himself, in his gracious operations. Hence the apostle speaks of "the love of the Spirit," Rom. xv. 30, and the sacred writers generally represent the enjoyment of his influences as a matter of the highest thankfulnesss and praise.

If, therefore, the communication of the Spirit is thus, without exception, ascribed to the free grace of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, we conclude that it is not requisite to human power, or just responsibility.

Some, who maintain the reverse of this conclusion, have been led also to question the premises, and to assert, with more or less distinctness, that, as a measure of the Spirit's influence is essential to enable every man to do his duty, so God is bound to give it to every man for this end; that such a help is due to our present condition; and that he could not justly judge and punish us, as fallen creatures, without previously restoring us to such a state of power. This is a fair specimen of the weight with which the sentiment of man's natural inability bears upon every portion of divine truth; a sentiment not more mischievous in sapping the foundation of human responsibility, than it is injurious to the lustre of divine sovereignty. That the gift of the Spirit is in any measure *due* to man, is one of the last things which, with any regard to Scripture, it would seem possible to maintain; nor can it be asserted, without implying the connected but incredible idea, that God was equally bound to redeem the world, and to effect its redemption by the death of his Son.

CHAPTER X.

Whether the ability of man is not maintained in the Holy Scriptures:—The argument from express words of Sacred Writ.

THE Sacred Scriptures are the standard and depository of all truth. They are not only a testimony, but a law; and nothing is truth which is not according to this rule. How deeply ashamed would the writer feel, if he were conscious of shrinking in the least degree from this test; or if he were fearful lest the Word of God should overthrow his opinion! Infinitely removed be such a feeling! Welcome, thou light of heavenly wisdom, whatever shadows may disperse at thy rising!

Frequent references to the Scriptures of truth have already been made; but it yet remains to notice some particular and important passages, which have not pointedly come under review.

I. We conceive, then, that there are portions of Holy Writ in which the power of man is expressly asserted.

1. Such a one occurs, Isaiah vi. 9, 10: "Go and tell this people, Hear ye, indeed, but understand not; see ye, indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed."

This forcible passage, with some slight variations, is quoted by our Lord, as recorded by all the evangelists. In John xii. 40, it is thus quoted: "He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." In Luke viii. 10: "That seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand." In Mark iv. 12: "That seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand, lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them." In Matt. xiii. 14, 15, more fully: "By hearing ye shall hear, and not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive; for this people's heart is waxed gross, and

their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed: lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

It is quoted also by the apostle Paul, in his appeal to the unbelieving Jews at Rome, Acts xxviii. 26, 27: "Go unto this people and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive; for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

It is thus clearly established that the passage refers to the matter before us, that is to say, to the state and action of the human mind in relation to the reception of divine truth. The import of it remains to be inquired into.

We observe, then, that the prophet uses two series of terms, the one with an affirmative, and the other with a negative. Those who reject the Word of the Lord do "see" and "hear," but they do not "perceive" or "understand." This might seem to indicate that what they see and hear does not reach the mind, so as to be literally understood or perceived; but it is impossible to take it in this sense, inasmuch as this would be nothing short of a state of mental incompetency. Nor is it so intended, as is manifest from that which immediately follows—"lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears." This clause is explanatory of the former, and shows its meaning to be, that unbelievers both see and do not see, both hear and do not hear. It is now evident that we have the words see and hear used in two senses, inasmuch as, if we take them in one and the same sense, the passage contains a direct contradiction, which cannot be supposed. The meaning of course is, that they see but do not observe, that they hear but do not hearken; and that, while they see and hear, the things declared are as much disregarded as though they neither saw nor heard them.

The language of Isaiah gives rise, however, to a further question, relating to the source to which this disregard of divine rebukes is to be referred. The word of the Lord to him runs in the following terms: "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes;

lest they see," &c. It might be inferred from this that indisposition to obey is the result of divine action on the mind of man, and not therefore a matter of just blame. Some of the New Testament citations of this passage are of a similar apparent import. While it is quite impossible to suppose that such is the real meaning, there is sufficient evidence in the quotations themselves that it is not so. As quoted by our Lord in Matthew, and by Paul, the words convey a simple statement of the fact that "the heart of the people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing," while the next clause—"their eyes have they closed, lest they should see with their eyes"—unequivocally indicates the reference of the whole passage to a wilful and therefore a criminal inattention. It is not for a moment to be supposed that Christ and his apostle pervert the language of the seer from the meaning he intended. They do but translate it. Isaiah spoke as a prophet, and in the language of prophecy it was customary to represent God as doing what was actually to be done by men. No doubt can be entertained, therefore, as to the interpretation of this text. It affirms that men have eyes to see, and ears to hear; nay, that they do both see and hear, but that they do not observe nor hearken; on the contrary, they shut their eyes, they obstruct their ears, they stupefy their hearts, lest they should see, hear, and feel to practical purpose the truths they dislike. In a word, men have faculties in the use of which they would do all that God requires of them; but they will not employ them for this end.

2. A passage of similar bearing may be found, John ix. 39–41. "And Jesus said, For judgment am I come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind ye should have no sin; but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." In this passage there is a mixed reference to the sight of the body and the state of the mind, arising from the circumstance that our Lord had just spoken to the blind man whom he had restored to sight, and had taken occasion from his cure to reprove the spiritual blindness of the Jews. "For judgment," says he, or for discrimination, "am I come into the world: that they which see not

might see" (referring to the man then present, who had been restored to sight), "and that they which see might be made blind," that is, that the blindness, or wilful ignorance, of those classes among the Jews who had the amplest means of knowledge might be made apparent—referring to the perverseness with which the Jews had rejected the proofs of his Messiahship, as derived from that and other miraculous works. The Pharisees present concluded themselves to be among "those who see," and were doubtless described by our Lord under this phrase; but, somewhat piqued at the seeming association of blindness with their names, they asked him, "Are we blind also?" Some persons would have immediately replied, Yes, certainly; and had this been really the case, our Lord could not properly have avoided it, nor can we believe that he would have shrunk from it. But mark his answer: "If ye were blind ye should have no sin;" if you had not the power of appreciating the evidence of my true character afforded by this miracle, there would be nothing blameworthy in your not being convinced by it: "but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." To avoid the force of this latter clause, it has been said that our Lord is not there asserting that they did see, but only taking them at their own word, which might be false, and probably was so. But, when we consider that the circumstances were such as brought the truth of the statement into immediate question, it will be evident that, if it was not true, it was by all means incumbent on their Divine Instructor to show its falsehood; otherwise he would have been allowing them to think it true, and thus, if it were not so, attaching his sanction to a ruinous error. Besides, he has just before plainly described them in similar terms, as "those who see;" so that he does not merely take them at *their* word, but at his own. And, lastly, the nature and importance of the argument built upon it precludes the possibility of considering it as an error. The fact of their seeing is made the premises for the conclusion that they were criminal. Their saying "We see," if it were a mistake, could not authorize this conclusion; but, on the contrary, would lead to the inference that their rejection of the Messiah had no guilt in it—one of the last lessons we can conceive to have been inculcated by our Lord. The entire argument, therefore, is this: "If ye were blind ye should have no sin;" if you had not power to appreciate the

evidence of my true character, you would incur no blame by rejecting me; "but, as ye truly say, ye see;" you have all facilities for apprehending my glory; "therefore your sin remaineth." No words can more clearly assert that these wicked Pharisees were not really blind, though they acted as if they were. They possessed full power of acting otherwise; and, if this had not been the case, they would have had no sin.

We are very well aware that, upon another occasion, our Lord represented these same persons as blind, Matt. xxiii. 16–19. We suppose it will be maintained, however, on both sides, that this Divine Instructor was not guilty of contradicting himself; and if so, we must understand him to say that the Pharisees were blind only in such a sense as was consistent with their seeing; that is to say, that, possessing the power of sight, they did not use it, but acted as though they were blind, and so remained in ignorance and sin. But of this and similar expressions we shall speak more fully presently.

3. The same truth is expressly asserted by our Lord, Matt. xiii. 12; "Because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand;" language which fully establishes the power of men to effect all the purposes for which sight and hearing were given—they see and hear—while it touchingly complains of the guilty inattention by which instruction was rendered fruitless.

4. We mention a large portion of Scripture carrying the same idea with it, when we refer to the parables of our Lord. Every one has been struck, not merely with their general verisimilitude and beauty, but with their minute and comprehensive accuracy. It may reasonably be expected, therefore, that in them no important feature in the character or condition of man will be omitted; or that, if any be not illustrated in one parable, it will be found in another. Least of all can it be supposed that a matter of such particular prominence and such vital importance as the ability or inability of man has been overlooked. Nor shall we find that it has been so.

If the power appropriate to man as a moral agent be wanting, the objects introduced emblematically to exhibit his conduct, either as to what it is or what it ought to be, should be equally destitute of the power appropriate to them; otherwise the analogy necessary to the very structure of the

parable does not exist, and nothing can result from it but confusion and error. So when man as a moral agent is compared to a tree, if the former be devoid of power for moral action, the latter should be destitute of power for vegetable action; or if a man's conduct towards God is illustrated by the conduct of a son towards his father, if the former have no power over his conduct towards God, the latter should have no power over his conduct towards his parent.

Let the reader recollect himself but a moment, and he will be convinced that none of the parables are formed upon this principle. They uniformly introduce, for the illustration of our moral action, objects or agents in possession of the entire power belonging to their nature. If an impenitent sinner be compared to a fig-tree, it is to a living and not a dead one, Luke xiii. 6. If the condition of man is shadowed forth by that of servants who received talents to employ for their Lord, they receive every man "according to his several ability," Matt. xxv. 15. If the address of the Gospel is likened to the invitation to a feast, the parties to whom it is addressed have full power of accepting it, Luke xiv. 16, *et seq.* We might go in the same manner through the whole of the parables, and not find a single instance in which a different idea is insinuated.

This is a remarkable fact, and bears directly upon our argument. These parables in which man, in relation to his moral conduct, is compared to objects possessing the whole power which naturally pertains to them, clearly intimate that man is in possession of all the power requisite to moral action. If this is not the case, the parables are founded on a mistaken analogy, and must lead to erroneous conclusions.

If man were really destitute of power, he not only might but *must* be compared to objects devoid of their proper strength, as to a dead tree, a dead man, the diseased, or the blind; but it is very remarkable that, while epithets of this kind are freely applied to man himself, not a single object of this class is used for the purpose of parabolical illustration.

5. In this place, also, we may introduce the passage in which the apostle asserts the intrinsic and independent sufficiency of the Divine Word: "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus," 2 Tim. iii. 15. We scarcely need stay to prove that the

apostle here assigns to the Scriptures a sufficiency to make men wise to salvation apart from the influence of the Holy Spirit. No reference to the Spirit is contained in the passage or its connexion, nor is there any ground for introducing it. We observe more particularly, that the sufficiency of the Scriptures to impart saving wisdom is not to be viewed in the abstract, but in connexion with the persons to whom they are given; they are able to make *us* wise unto salvation. Now this, it is manifest, implies something respecting our condition, as well as the excellency of the Scripture itself. It is not able to make an idiot, or an infant, or a dead man, wise unto salvation. It can have this effect upon none but such as are capable of understanding, appreciating, and obeying it; whence it evidently follows, that we, whom it *is* able to make wise unto salvation, are able to understand it, to appreciate, and to obey.

6. Another class of passages concurring to prove the sentiment under review, may be found in those which require and enforce consideration, not merely as a duty, but as the method of obedience to the divine will. These which follow are such: "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" Deut. xxxii. 29. "Consider how great things God hath done for you," 1 Sam. xii. 24. "Thus saith the Lord, Consider your ways," Hag. i. 5–7. Of the same tenor are the texts in which the Lord requires men to hearken,—a word expressive simply of attention, or consideration: "Take heed and hearken, O Israel," Deut. xxvii. 9. "Hearken to me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness. Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto me; *hear*, and your soul shall live," Isa. xlvi. 12; lv. 2, 3. In some instances the word hearken is used to denote the very obedience to which it leads. "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams," 1 Sam. xv. 22. "Who will hearken and hear for the time to come?" Isa. lxii. 23. To these may be added the passages in which God rests the burden of his complaint for disobedience on the want of consideration: "But they refused to hearken, and stopped their ears," Zech. vii. 11. "Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider," Isa. i. 3. "They consider not in their hearts," Hosea vii. 2. "But they said, We will not hearken.

Behold ye walk every one after the imagination of his evil heart, that ye may not hearken unto me," Jer. vi. 17; xvi. 12.

Every attentive reader of the Scriptures knows that similar language might be quoted to a great extent. Let us ask what is the import of it. Can it imply less than we have stated above, namely, that, in God's own view, consideration is the method by which obedience is to be induced, and an exercise from which it would certainly follow? To engage us to obedience he requires consideration, and nothing else; if obedience be not rendered he ascribes it to the want of consideration, and to nothing else. Is he right in doing so? Is it conceivable that he would have done so, if the effects ought to be referred to any other cause? Are we going beyond the clear testimony of the Divine Word, when we say, that the question of obedience or disobedience is exclusively a question of consideration or inconsideration? But, if this be the case, then it cannot be maintained that we have not power to obey, unless it can be said also that we have not power to consider, which obviously cannot be said of any man who retains his intelligent faculties. So long as we have power to consider, according to God's own Word we have power to obey.

We may be allowed here to pause a moment, for the sake of pointing out to such of our readers as have made themselves acquainted with the principles of moral science as laid down in our first chapter, their perfect accordance with the language of Sacred Writ. We have stated that our entire faculty of self-regulation lies in the power of attention, or consideration; and that this faculty gives an effective power of self-control, so far as motives are sufficient for the purpose. The Scriptures address us precisely in the manner which we should anticipate upon this supposition. They call upon us to obey commands, and to consider in order that we may obey; if we do not obey, they tell us that it is because we have not considered; both these addresses proceeding plainly upon the principle, that, if we had considered, we should have obeyed. The Scriptures, it is true, were not intended to teach us moral philosophy; but there is nevertheless a system of moral philosophy on which the Scriptures proceed, and, when we find one with which they manifestly harmonize, we may satisfactorily assure ourselves of its truth.

CHAPTER XI.

The argument from express words of Scripture continued.

II. Besides the passages which refer directly to the power possessed by man, those bear as decisively upon the argument, which indicate the nature of the cause preventing the performance of right action.

Two things being necessary to the performance of any action, namely, power to perform it and a disposition to perform it, one of two causes likewise, or either of them, may operate to its prevention; namely, a want of disposition or a want of power. Do the Scriptures say anything respecting the cause which hinders men from repenting? And if they do, to which of those above-mentioned do they ascribe this impediment? The information they contain on this subject may be expected to be full and satisfactory.

1. It will now probably occur immediately to every reader, how often we are expressly taught that men *cannot* repent. Such is the language of our Lord:—"No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him. Without me ye can do nothing. With men this is impossible," John vi. 44; xv. 5; Matt. xix. 26. Similar expressions are of frequent occurrence in the Sacred Writings. This phraseology has been conceived to prove, beyond the possibility of doubt, that men have no power to turn to God. Is it not, it is demanded, expressly asserted? And can a doctrine so clearly stated ever be impugned, without calling in question the authority of Holy Writ?

Far be it from us to incur this heavy criminality, or to betake ourselves to such a refuge! It must be a bad system which shrinks from any portion of God's Word; and the writer hopes he should feel no satisfaction in any sentiment he holds, if there were a single expression in the Oracles of God to which he could not attach a fair, full, and consistent meaning. In this case he has simply to observe, that he conceives the import of the terms in question to have been mistaken.

In order to show this, we may begin by observing that the

word *cannot* is by no means invariably used to denote the want of power, but is very commonly employed to express determination. We do this with great frequency in our ordinary conversation: as when we say, I cannot come, or, I cannot agree to it; in which cases all that we mean to convey is our determination not to do these things. Now, if it be a fact that the term *cannot* is not always used to denote power, but sometimes determination, then the argument drawn from its use is clearly inconclusive; and it requires to be ascertained in what cases it refers to the one, and in what cases to the other.

This inquiry it will be much better to conduct on general principles, than with reference to particular passages of Scripture. Let us first ascertain the rule by which the import of the term is regulated, and then impartially apply it to whatever cases may arise. This rule we conceive to be as follows:—The term *cannot* denotes determination, and not power, when and whenever it is applied to acts, whether internal or external, the performance of which depends upon the state of the mind.

It is scarcely needful to observe, that many of our actions do depend upon the state of the mind, and upon nothing else. Whether, in a state of health and freedom, I rise or sit, I walk or remain in the house, I read or write (and innumerable cases might be added), depends solely on the state of my mind; that is to say, according to the state of my mind I may, and shall, either do them or let them alone. Now, if in any of these cases I were to use the word cannot, as in saying, I cannot walk now, or I cannot come yet, the word cannot in this case would simply express my determination that I would not. The reason why it must be understood in this sense is, that I am plainly in full possession of power to do the very things I have said I cannot do; nothing but my determination not to do them prevents me; and therefore the word cannot, in this case, must be taken to denote determination and not power.

To show how purely this term is applied to the purpose of expressing determination only, without the slightest association with the idea of power, we may give the following example. Conceive a plan to be submitted to you for your consideration and concurrence. It appears to you unadvisable, and you say, I am not willing to embark in such a

business. Suppose it is pressed upon you more strongly; you still disapprove of it, and reply, Do not urge it, for I never *can* agree to it. Why have you made this change of expression? Had any fit of inability come over you just at that moment, that you said, I cannot? Or did you not mean to express precisely the same thing by cannot in your second answer as by not being willing in your first, only more decidedly? Imagine further, that, upon fuller information, your objections vanish, and you ultimately agree to the plan proposed. Is this because you have acquired any new power, which you had not five minutes before? Or is it not rather that your determination merely has undergone a change? It is evident, therefore, that the phrases cannot and will not are used interchangeably, the former conveying precisely, though more emphatically, the meaning of the latter.

It may be said, that, although in some instances, where an action depends on the state of the mind, the word cannot may denote only determination and not power, it does not follow that this should always be the case; sometimes, perhaps, it may indicate a want of power also. The proof of such a use of the word lies upon the party who adduces the possibility of it. We believe that such a case does not exist, but that, upon the most extensive and accurate examination, it will be found that, whenever the word cannot is applied to acts which depend upon the state of the mind, it denotes determination only, without any reference to power. Nor can it very well be otherwise. For, in the first place, it would be a very confounding method of speech to make one and the same word convey two dissimilar, and in some respects opposite ideas, at once. It is a considerable freedom with language, to employ a word for different purposes at different times, and in different circumstances; but to go further than this is a kind of legerdemain which could not be accomplished without some little difficulty. In the next place, it is not in the nature of things that, when an act depends upon the state of the mind, power should be wanting; for, if power is wanting, then the act does not depend on the state of the mind. It is very possible that both power and disposition to perform a given action may be wanting at the same time, as, for example, that a man may have neither money nor inclination to pay his debts; but in this case it is clear that the non-performance of the action

does not depend upon the state of his mind, because, if the state of his mind were different, still he could not pay his debts, not having money for the purpose. If it were said of such a man, he cannot pay his debts, nobody would understand this of his will, but of his power. The reason of this is, that the strict and primary reference of the word cannot is to power, its reference to will being secondary and analogical, whence it follows that, whenever the idea of power is present, the word cannot must apply to it, and not to will. It can apply to will, therefore, only when the idea of power is absent, and obviously must do so whenever this is the case. Whenever, therefore, an act depends upon the state of the mind, a case in which the idea of power is not implicated, if the word cannot be used in reference to it, it refers to determination only, and not to power.

Our object in these remarks is not to frame any artificial rule to which language may be forcibly reduced, but to ascertain upon what principles its employment is actually regulated among mankind. If the universal practice in reference to the word *cannot* be as above stated, the rule so deduced is capable of the most strict and just application to the declarations of Holy Writ. The language in which God has spoken to us is the language of men; it was in all respects suitable, desirable, and necessary, that it should be so, if it was intended for the instruction of mankind; nor can any good reason be assigned why the import of it should not be determined by the same methods as that of ordinary life. Upon this principle, then, we ask what our Divine Lord means when he says, "No man can come unto me." The meaning of it may be, no man has power to come; but since the word *cannot* has not always this meaning, it is proper to inquire into the particulars of the case. Upon what does a sinner's coming to Christ depend? If it depends upon the state of his mind, the word cannot in this case does not relate to power, but to determination only. Let the Scriptures be consulted on this head.

It is remarkable that, when our friends from whom we differ refer to Sacred Writ for information respecting the obstacle to repentance, their quotations are invariably of one kind. They adduce immediately various declarations that men cannot come to Christ; and, if you were to listen to them only, you would never imagine that there were passages

which exhibited the subject in any other light. Yet there are such passages, and many of them. A sample of them follows: "Ye *will* not come unto me that ye might have life. How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye *would* not. He said, *I will not.* Because I called, and ye *refused,* I stretched out my hand, and no man regarded. Seeing ye *put away from you* the Word of God, we turn unto the Gentiles," John v. 40; Matt. xxiii. 37, xxi. 29; Prov. i. 21; Acts xiii. 46. Such quotations might be greatly multiplied. And, in considering the import of the Divine Oracles respecting the hindrance to repentance, why should they be overlooked? Have they no meaning? On the contrary, we conceive their meaning to be clear and indubitable; namely, that sinners do not repent because they will not. Their conduct in this respect depends upon the state of their minds; there being nothing but enmity to God to prevent their coming to him through his Son. But if this be the case, then, according to the rule laid down, the word cannot does not refer to power, but to determination only.

If this conclusion is to be set aside, it must be by showing that repentance does not depend upon the state of a sinner's mind, that there is some other obstacle to it besides the wickedness of his heart, and such an obstacle as would still operate if the wickedness of his heart were destroyed. It would afford us great pleasure to see this fairly undertaken, and we should look with much interest for the result. For ourselves we will only say, that, if there were any such impediment, the burden of men's impenitence could not be justly laid upon their unwillingness, where, nevertheless, our Divine Lord has laid it, and where doubtless it truly rests.

In reference to the discussion in which we are engaged, the terms *will not,* &c., have a more decisive bearing than the term *cannot,* to which the greater prominence has been given. The last is an analogical expression, and requires a limited construction; the former are literal expressions and have only to be interpreted in their strict and obvious sense: the latter tells us what the hindrance to repentance is like, the former tell us what it is. With respect to the nature of the impediment, therefore, these are the only passages which give us any information at all, and, instead of being thrown into the back-ground, are the only ones which should be consulted.

If it be finally admitted, and we conceive it cannot be disproved, that the only thing which obstructs the return of sinners to God through Christ is the alienation of their hearts, then it follows, as we have shown, that the word *cannot*, as applied to this case, is meant to express no want of power, but simply the sinner's determination. Should an objection be raised on the supposed ground of taking away the meaning of words, or of introducing confusion into the use of language, the reply is obvious. We wish to understand the words of Holy Writ precisely in the same manner as we do those of ordinary life, as it is quite natural, and even imperative that we should, unless reason can be shown for the contrary. Can any such reason be shown? Why do any persons insist upon our allowing a meaning to certain phrases *in* the Bible, which neither we nor they would assign to them *out of* the Bible? The proof of such a necessity lies with them, and must be adduced before we can comply with their demand. So far from taking away the meaning of words, we give them the precise and full import currently attached to them; why do those who differ from us impose on them a different one? And as to introducing confusion into the use of language, this is the very thing of which they are pre-eminently guilty, while the method we adopt is the only way of avoiding it. No confusion arises in ordinary intercourse from the word *cannot* being frequently used to express determination only; and for this reason, that the cases in which actions depend upon the state of the mind are for the most part very manifest, and that in all such cases the word is known to refer to the determination alone. If the language of Scripture is treated on the same principle, there will be no confusion in the use of it; but, if it comes to be insisted on that the word cannot must in all cases denote some want of power, or that it may do so in some instances where nevertheless the act depends upon the state of the mind, this will introduce confusion enough, and it would as grievously confound the intercourse of men, as it does the Oracles of God.

Should it be asked why, if men have power to repent, it is so repeatedly and strongly asserted that they cannot, it is only needful to ask in reply, why, in common life, we so frequently say we cannot do a thing which we really can do. The reason in both cases is one and the same. It is that

this form of expression conveys the idea of strong feeling and fixed determination more emphatically, and at the same time less offensively, than any other. So when, in reply to your importunate request, a friend says, I *cannot* do it, it is equivalent to his telling you that it is of no use to press him further; and it intimates at the same time that his refusal arises from no unwillingness to oblige you, but from the imperative influence of other considerations. Or so again, when you bid a mother throw her child into the water, or into the fire, and she clasps the babe to her bosom, and exclaims, I *cannot* do that, it is merely a natural mode of telling you how vehemently her feelings revolt from the act. Just such is the use of these terms in Sacred Writ. They express the feeling and determination of a sinner with great emphasis, and afford, perhaps, the only method by which the painful but important truth of its certain prevalence can be convincingly conveyed.

We may now perhaps dismiss, without more particular consideration, the whole of the passages of Scripture the force of which lies in the use of the term *cannot*. To decide the import of one is to decide that of them all. With them, also, may be classed the kindred term *impossible*, which occurs Matt. xix. 26; but which is used, and must be interpreted, upon the same principle as the almost identical word cannot, already considered.

A phrase somewhat different occurs in Rom. v. 6: "For when we were yet *without strength*, Christ died for the ungodly." We conceive this passage to be inapplicable to the question before us; inasmuch as it seems to refer, not to the case of a sinner's coming to God through Christ, but to the practicability of opening a way for the approach of a sinner at all. Most certainly we are without strength to make an atonement for sin, or to satisfy any of the demands of God's righteous law in respect of the justification of a sinner; and this consideration gives great force to the statement of the apostle, that, in this helpless condition, Christ died for us. But this has no connexion with the present argument. The question we are now to answer pre-supposes that Christ has died, and that the way to God through him is open; whether a sinner has power to come to God through Christ, is a question very different from that which relates to his power to atone for sin, and is to be answered on very different principles.

The same remark is applicable to another passage, which has been quoted in this connexion, from Rom. viii. 8. "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." The apostle in this place is not referring to the actions of ungodly men, but to their estimation in the sight of God; and the sentiment would be more accurately expressed by saying, Those who are in the flesh cannot be acceptable to God, or approved by him, Θεῷ ἀρέσαι οὐ δύνανται. In this view the text has manifestly no bearing on the subject before us.

2. Besides the passages which contain the terms *cannot* and *impossible*, which have been erroneously conceived to be express declarations of human inability, there are others which are regarded as furnishing powerful auxiliary evidence on the same side. Such are the following: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye who are accustomed to do evil learn to do well. Who were dead in trespasses and sins. Can these dry bones live?" Jer. xiii. 23; Eph. ii. 1; Ezek. xxxvii. 3.

We class these passages together at present, for the sake of making respecting them one general observation. They are all of them plainly metaphorical. They are not descriptions, but figures of speech. It may perhaps be said that this is no uncommon way of evading a difficulty, and may be used for ill purposes as well as good. We are quite aware of this. But still it must be allowed that there are figurative expressions in the Divine Oracles; and while we fully admit, on the one hand, that they have a definite and important meaning which must not be frittered away, we must contend, on the other, against any unwarrantable stretch of their signification. To avoid difficulties on both sides, let us set down, in a few words, the rules by which the character and the import of any figurative expression may be ascertained.

We agree, then, that every passage and every phrase is to be taken literally, unless there is something in its position or use which determines it to be figurative; but every expression must be taken to be figurative which, in its literal sense, is inapplicable to the subject to which it is applied. When, for example, our Lord says, John xv. 1, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman," inasmuch as the terms vine and husbandman are not literally applicable to the Divine Father and Son, we say they are figuratively

used. Now there is no difficulty whatever in the use of this rule. The nature of the things ordinarily spoken of is sufficiently obvious to inform us, with very little trouble, whether the words applied to them are literally applicable or not. If they are, we allow of no metaphor; if they are not, we cannot deny it.

Let us inquire further, what effect is produced, on the meaning and interpretation of a word when it is figuratively employed.

When a word is figuratively employed, it is taken from a subject to which it properly or strictly refers, and applied to one to which it does not properly refer. So when David says, "The Lord is my light:" he takes the word light, which properly refers to the effect of some luminous body on the eye, and applies it to the influence of divine mercy on his mind. Now, when a word is so taken from one subject and applied to another, it is obviously impossible that, in its secondary use, it can convey *all* the ideas which it did in its primary one, the two objects being far from having altogether the same properties. The effect of using a word figuratively, therefore, is to limit its signification, and to select some of the ideas it has conveyed in its proper employment, for application in its new and (rhetorically speaking) improper one. Thus, in saying, "The Lord is my light," the psalmist drops all the ideas belonging to light as a material body, and retains only those relating to its directing and cheering influence. This rule also we shall find uniformly and easily applicable. We have only to notice the features in which the objects compared either agree or disagree: in those in which they agree the ordinary import of the term which is now metaphorically used will apply; in those in which they do not agree its application is not to be attempted.

With these simple rules in our hand, let us resume the passages which await our attention.

(1.) Jer. xiii. 23. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye who are accustomed to do evil learn to do well." The Ethiopian changing his skin and the leopard his spots, is here put in comparison with a man's ceasing to do evil and learning to do well; that is, a change in the state of the body is compared with a change in the state of the mind—a change in something in its own nature unalterable by man, with a change in something which

is susceptible of alteration, as the state of the mind undeniably is, by human action. It is evident that there is no similarity in the two cases in respect of capability of change; and on this point, therefore, nothing can be learnt from the comparison. The aspect in which the cases are similar, is the actual non-production of the result, and the certainty that it will not be produced. Let means to any extent be employed for the changing of the Ethiopian's skin or the leopard's spots, the end will never be attained; and with equal certainty, notwithstanding the use of every means, will those who have been accustomed to do evil, never learn to do well. This we conceive to be the fair and full force of the metaphor here employed, and we most freely adopt it. Our readers will perceive, however, that, like the terms already noticed, it does nothing more than express emphatically the fixedness of a sinner's determination; it indicates nothing respecting his power, only that, by this very circumstance, the existence of it is implied.

(2.) Eph. ii. 1. "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins."

This passage has been so commonly taken to denote a sinner's state of mind, that it may seem strange, perhaps, to call in question this application of it. I am of opinion, nevertheless, from a very careful examination of the context and the scope of the apostle's argument, that the words quoted relate to the misery of a sinner's condition, and not to the state of his mind; and I think any person who will insist upon giving the clause its proper and necessary meaning in its place will in the end be satisfied of the correctness of this view. On this ground I might pass it by as irrelevant to the question before us; but, that there may be no semblance of injustice to the argument, I am willing to take it in the ordinary sense. It is undoubtedly very forcible language, nor have I any inclination to weaken it. I apprehend, however, that it is to be considered as figurative and not literal. The word death properly refers to organic or physical life; but here it is applied to a state of the mind, which, although it may be in some respects analogous to natural life, is manifestly not identical with it, and to which, therefore, a term derived from so different a subject cannot be in every respect applicable. The import of the term death, therefore, must be limited in this case; and not all

the ideas ordinarily conveyed by it can be transferred to the new object, but only such as the existing analogy may permit. The things put into comparison with each other are the body under the influence of death, and man, as a moral agent, under the influence of a sinful disposition. Now, death produces two principal effects: first, the non-performance of vital action, as seeing, hearing, feeling, &c.; and secondly, the destruction of the organization from which these actions proceeded, or the non-existence of power to perform them. In like manner, a sinful disposition induces the entire non-performance of right action in one who is under its reigning influence; but the influence of a sinful disposition does *not* destroy the structure from which right action may proceed, that consisting, as we have shown, in the intelligent faculties with which God has made us, and which remain as entire in the wicked as in the just. We know in fact, that, whatever the influence of trespasses and sins on a man's mind may be, they do not destroy its powers of action; for, in that case, it would be as incapable of evil as of good. The point in which an analogy does obtain between the state of a dead body and that of a mind under the influence of sin, is this; that, as the destruction of animal life suspends the exercise of animal functions, so right exercises of mind are in fact prevented by the influence of sin, and with as much certainty, though not by a similar cause. All that this passage teaches us, therefore, is the fixedness of a sinner's determination, or the entire certainty that men of themselves will not turn to God.

Should any of our readers be dissatisfied with the view now given, it will be material for them to show, if it can be shown, that the term dead has in this case a literal, and not a figurative meaning. If they can do this, they will gain a great advantage to their cause. There are, however, some few difficulties in the way of it. We may observe, for example, that, literally speaking, the soul of man is not dead but alive, as is manifest from its continual action, though that action be wrong; to which it might be added that the soul is never to die, because it is immortal. The apostle, moreover, is not telling us in what state man is generally, but in what state he is so far as he is influenced by sin,—"dead in [or by] trespasses and sins;" and we know that the influence of sin is to make a man act wrong, and not by any

means to render him incapable of acting at all. Other expressions also are used on the same subject, which are quite incompatible with a literal interpretation of this. As, for instance, in a passage which occurs in Eph. v. 14, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead." How can a man be at the same time both dead and asleep? Or, if he be literally dead, what is it short of absurdity to call him blind, or dull of hearing; or to ascribe to him either evil or good in any form? These and a few other difficulties must be surmounted, in order to establish a literal meaning of the passage before us; and, until this is done, we believe the view taken of it above cannot be impeached.

(3.) To the same class of expressions belong those which represent men as blind, or dull of hearing, or asleep: "The God of this world hath blinded the eyes of them which believe not. Their ears are dull of hearing. Awake, thou that sleepest," 2 Cor. iv. 4; Acts xxviii. 27; Eph. v. 14. No question will be raised, we suppose, as to the figurative character of this phraseology. Blindness, deafness, and sleep, are states of the body; to which, if any state of the mind be analogous at all, it can be only in part. So far as these terms express an existing state of insensibility, they may be applied with their utmost force to the state of a sinner's mind towards God; but, so far as they indicate an incapacity for action, the application of them to the state of a sinner's mind is forbidden by the known fact, that he is actually in the enjoyment of his rational and intelligent powers, which constitute his capacity. These expressions, therefore, denote nothing more than an existing state of inattention to divine things.

It may be observed in passing, that, although it is manifestly unwarrantable to make a literal use of the texts we have been examining, it is on such an application of them that their whole force, as used with great frequency by divines of a certain class, depends. Exhorting sinners has been seriously compared to going into a burying ground, and calling to the dead; just as though men under the influence of sin were literally dead, or dead in the whole sense of that term. What brave words may be built upon the most glaring fallacies!

It has often been imagined to be an inseparable difficulty in the way of maintaining human ability, that it involves an

apparently express contradiction to the Sacred Scriptures, and much wonder seems to have been felt that the advocates of the sentiment have not been startled by so tremendous a necessity. An appearance of contradiction, however, results necessarily and in all cases from the use of analogical language. For example, the Bible affirms that God is a sun and shield; yet who would hesitate to say that God is *not* either a sun or a shield? Of bread Christ declared that it was his body; yet we maintain without scruple that the sacramental bread is *not* the body of Christ. Do we feel guilty in either of these cases of contradicting the Word of God? Certainly not. Whenever words are used out of their strict reference, they are true in one sense and false in another; and necessarily so, because it pertains to such a use of words to retain only a part of their ordinary meaning. Thus it may be said of the declaration "No man can come unto me," that, if the word *can* be analogically used in it, as we have endeavoured to show, it is true in one sense, and in another it is false. Take such part of the ordinary meaning of the word cannot as the analogy in the case justifies, and it is true; but take such part as is not justified by the existing analogy, and you make a new assertion, one which Christ never intended, and this assertion is false. Seeming contradictions are thus, when properly understood, harmonious truths. God both is and is not a sun and shield; bread both is and is not the body of Christ; man both can and cannot turn to God; conversion is both possible and impossible with men; sinners are at the same time both dead and alive. The one series of these assertions is true figuratively, and the other is true literally. When I say God is not a sun, it is no way contradictory of the text which declares that he is one, because that text is meant to intimate only that in some respects he is like one. And when I say men can come to Christ, it is equally remote from opposition to his affirmation that they cannot, because the only intended meaning of those words is that they certainly will not, they being in this respect like men that cannot.

If it be true, therefore, that the terms in question are figuratively or analogically employed, we are running no hazard by a merely apparent contradiction of them. It is no real contradiction; but, in fact, is absolutely necessary in order to set these passages of Scripture in their true light.

It has been reprobated as, if not incorrect, at least unguarded, to affirm in an unqualified manner that men can come to Christ, because Christ expressly declares that they cannot. Let us only suppose that the same principle had been acted upon in reference to those other words of his, which are entitled to at least equal reverence, "This is my body;" that no person should ever have dared to say bread was not his body, because he expressly affirmed that it was: what would have been the result? The doctrine of transubstantiation would not have been exploded to the present day. And a similar mischief is now resulting from an unwillingness to affirm that men can come to Christ; it allows and encourages men to suppose that they literally and truly cannot; it conceals the very important fact of the limited import of the term in this connexion; and so renders our over-scrupulous regard to the letter of God's Word subversive of its real meaning, and conducive to the propagation of pernicious and destructive error.

3. Having disposed of the passages which have been conceived to indicate a want of power as the operating cause in a sinner's impenitence, and endeavoured to show that they express nothing more than the fixedness of his determination, we may proceed to notice some by which the latter idea is directly conveyed.

(1.) We may be permitted briefly to refer again to the texts already quoted, which affirm that sinners will not come to God through Christ. "Ye *will not* come unto me that ye might have life. How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and *ye would not.* Ye *would* none of my reproof," John v. 40; Matt. xxiii. 27; Prov. i. 25. Here is no metaphor. The words are used in their literal sense, and must be taken strictly to mean that men's determination not to come to Christ is the reason why they do not come. But if so, it cannot be true that they are unable; for in that case their inability would be the reason, or at least a part of the reason, why they did not come.

(2.) Another class of expressions may here be noticed. "Because I have called and *ye refused*, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded, but *ye have set at naught* all my counsel, and would none of my reproof. For that they

hated knowledge, and did *not choose* the fear of the Lord. Seeing *ye put away from you* the Word of God," Prov. i. 24, 25, 29; Acts xiii. 46. It is clearly stated in these texts that men's impenitence is of the nature of a refusal, a setting at naught, or a putting away of the Gospel message. Now, these acts arise from a state of the mind, and from their own nature can arise from nothing else. That non-performance of a thing which arises from want of power is never called a refusal, nor can it be so without a flagrant absurdity. It seems evident, therefore, that the only cause operating to prevent men from coming to Christ is the state of their minds, which, according to the definitions laid down in the outset, is totally distinct and widely different from a want of power.

(3.) Phraseology of similar import occurs in John iii. 19, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men have loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." The truth here inculcated is, that men continue in spiritual ignorance because they prefer it to spiritual knowledge; they love darkness rather than light. But could it be said of a blind man that he did not see because he would rather not see? Surely, if a man's spiritual ignorance arises from preference, it cannot be held at the same time to arise from incapacity; because, if he were incapable, there could be no opportunity for preference to be exercised. The act of preference between two objects necessarily implies a power of choice respecting both.

(4.) We may notice also the language of the apostle, 1 Cor. ii. 14: "The natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." This passage has often been cited against us; but under an entire misapprehension of its meaning. If, indeed, the apostle have asserted that, unless a man be spiritual, or of a right disposition, he cannot understand the Gospel, it is a very grave matter; but, as on the one hand, it would be very difficult to reconcile such a sentiment with other parts of Scripture, so there is abundant reason to be satisfied that it has no existence here. A regard to the context will fully show that the apostle is speaking, not merely of knowing the Gospel, but of receiving, or enjoying it. His assertion is, therefore, that the natural man, or man alienated from God, cannot delight in the things

of God, because a congruity of mind is necessary to such a result. We know that there are many things, or, to speak more strictly, many properties of things, which we relish more or less according to the state of the mind. A miser does not enjoy the happiness of liberality, nor a voluptuary the pleasures of beneficence. The things of God are pre-eminently of this kind. The glory of God, the excellence of his law, the sinfulness of sin, the awfulness of eternity, and all things else pertaining to salvation, have the property of being relished according to the state of the mind. But, inasmuch as the state of the mind is the only impediment to such enjoyment, the absence of it is by this passage distinctly referred to a want of congeniality, and not to a want of power.

(5.) There is another passage deserving of notice, in which our Lord plainly states the cause which induces him to say that men cannot come to him to be of a strictly voluntary kind. John v. 44: "How can ye believe, who receive honour one of another?" There is no compulsion upon sinners, we suppose, to attach an undue importance to the honour which cometh from men. It is nothing more than the state of their minds which induces them to do so; yet it was as influenced by this disposition that our Lord declared they could not believe. The inference seems to be irresistible, that nothing but the state of their minds prevented their believing.

(6.) To these references may be added Luke viii. 15; where, in the parable of the sower, the fruitfulness of the word is ascribed to its being "received into an honest and good heart." All that is necessary to the efficacy of divine truth, therefore, is a right state of mind: and if so, there is no want of additional power.

The fact which we conceive to be established by the passages which have now gone under review is this; that the Scriptures uniformly represent a sinner's impenitence as resulting, not from a want of power, but exclusively from a want of disposition. We conclude, therefore, that disposition is wanting, and power is not. Had power been wanting, we could scarcely have searched the Bible so far without finding some, we might rather say many and unequivocal indications of the fact.

CHAPTER XII.

The argument from express words of Scripture concluded.

III. ANOTHER class of Scriptures illustrative of the point under consideration, may be found in those which describe the nature of the change wrought in the conversion of a sinner. The work effected in this case must of course correspond with the previous impediment to conversion. Now, the Scriptures speak frequently of this work; and uniformly represent it as lying in an alteration, not of the power possessed, but of the state of heart, or disposition. The following passages may serve as a specimen.

Ezek. xxxvi. 26. "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh." A new heart here evidently means a new state of heart, or disposition, as appears from the following phrase, a new spirit; and the beautiful metaphor which closes the verse conveys the same sentiment under a different form. Here is no reference to power.

John vi. 44. "No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." The use of the word draw in this passage is worthy of observation. Drawing, or inducing, is a process not any way adapted to the need of a man who has no power; it pertains rather to one who wants inclination. The work of the Spirit denoted by this word must be the gracious influence exercised upon the heart of a sinner, sweetly overcoming his hitherto cherished resistance.

Acts xvi. 14. "The Lord opened Lydia's heart, that she attended to the things which were spoken of Paul." The work of the Spirit as here described consisted not in communicating power, but in opening the heart, or producing a readiness to attend to the truth. Lydia must have had power to do this before, or else she could not have done it merely in consequence of such a change.

If the change produced in the conversion of a sinner were giving him power to repent, such language as this would surely be adapted to mislead. Not a single passage that we are aware of can be adduced to show that the Spirit of God

confers on a sinner the power of repentance. Yet, if power were wanting, he infallibly must do so; and, if he really did this, so important a part of his work would certainly not have been overlooked.

It will probably occur to the reader that the operation of the Holy Spirit in conversion is compared to a new birth, and even to a new creation, John iii. 3; 2 Cor. v. 17. This language has been conceived to indicate the production of new powers, as well as of new action. As it is manifest, however, that these are but comparisons, so, according to what has already been stated, it is necessary to observe the true extent of the analogy subsisting between the objects compared. Birth and creation, it will be admitted, do involve the production of new powers; but, when these terms are applied to the conversion of a sinner, we are immediately met by the fact that the powers of moral action in man are already in existence. Here is no room, therefore, for the production of new powers; and hence, of necessity, the analogy and the force of the metaphor are confined to the production of new action. Now, the production of new action in the mind is identical with a change of disposition, disposition being the source of habitual and permanent action. To which it may be added, that the change in character and conduct subsequent upon a change of disposition, or of the habitually prevalent state of the heart, in the case of a sinner towards God, is of quite sufficient magnitude and extent to justify the application of the phrases under examination. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

In a few instances may be observed the same analogical use of terms respecting conversion, which prevails so largely in reference to the impenitence of man. So the apostle says, "I thank God, who hath enabled me." But it is manifest that the word enabled refers to an operation on the state of his mind, and indicates only the production of a particular disposition.

Among the passages adduced in this controversy by those who differ from us, we have observed many which simply state the fact that salvation is of the Lord; that his people are made willing in the day of his power; that all Zion's children are taught of the Lord; and are born, not of blood,

nor of the will of the flesh, nor of man, but of God, Psalm iii. 8; cx. 3; Isa. liv. 13; John i. 13.

Undoubtedly these are highly important and decisive passages, as to the fact that the conversion of a sinner is in every case produced by divine influence; a fact to the cordial admission of which by the author the present volume bears ample and unequivocal testimony. But how does the assertion of this fact bear upon the question at issue? Here are two causes supposed, namely, the inability and the aversion of man, either of which will operate to render the Spirit's influence necessary to the conversion of a sinner; whichever of them may be conceived to be in operation, therefore, the necessity of that influence is consistently maintained, and consequently the fact that conversion never takes place but by virtue of it. Texts of Scripture which merely assert this assert an important truth, but they contain nothing which affects the point under discussion. This ground is occupied in common by both parties in the dispute, and is quite remote from the field in which the contest is to be decided. The introduction of these passages may excite the more observation, because they have often been brought forward with great ostentation, and exhibited with much parade of scripture proof, as though they alone were decisive of the controversy; while, in fact, this proceeding indicates nothing more than an entire misunderstanding of the subject, unless it should be taken as discovering too, what we are very unwilling to suspect, a wish to depreciate an argument by raising a prejudice against those who advance it.

The import and bearing of Holy Scripture in other aspects has been, or yet will be, noticed in other parts of this volume. It has been our object here to observe the passages which bear upon our subject directly, and to show that they are in unison with the general argument; which we trust has been satisfactorily done. It would occasion the writer the deepest affliction, if, however unconsciously, he should have been led by these remarks to alter or to diminish the full and true import of the Divine Word; and unutterably would he be ashamed of himself, if he could harbour a wish to evade, in however unwelcome a direction, the force of truth: but as, on the one hand, he hopes he has no aim but to know the mind of Christ; so, on the other, he solemnly believes what he has stated to be the correct expression of

that mind, so far as the passages examined are concerned. He has not, perhaps, adduced every text on which stress has been laid in this discussion; but those which have been brought forward he hopes are fair specimens of the classes to which they belong, and sufficient to establish and illustrate the principles on which the whole are to be interpreted. Nothing is more true or more important than the sentiment, that the express and direct sense of Scripture, wherever it can be ascertained, must determine every matter of religious opinion; but the case before us is one in which this very maxim has been made the foundation and the bulwark of an extensive and long prevalent error. The declaration that men cannot come to Christ having been once supposed to mean that they have no power to do so, the force with which this is asserted seems to have attached to the mistake a most unmerited character of sacredness and inviolability. Whatever might be disputed, this must not be called in question, because it was expressly asserted, and he who would dare to suggest a doubt of it could not but incur the heaviest accusations of heterodoxy. Slender basis for so vast a superstructure! Upon what films can wide-spread errors be established! The whole is but an oversight, a mere inadvertency, in misinterpreting analogical phraseology as though it were literal, and thus throwing out of view other portions of the Divine Word, a due regard to which would instantly have dispelled the delusion. The writer yields to no man in his willingness to submit to the sense of the Scriptures: he has no higher aim than to ascertain the mind of the Spirit therein. If he contends against what has long been held to be such, it is because he is convinced that it is a mistake; and he calls upon his brethren opposed to him in argument to abide by their own principle, and to vindicate their claim to a supreme veneration for God's Word. Which do they love best—their system, which they have long imagined the Word of God to support; or the Word of God, which they may now perceive leaves their system to its fall? The writer hopes and believes the latter; but the result will declare it.

CHAPTER XIII.

Whether the sentiment which ascribes power to man does not pre-eminently humble the sinner and glorify God:—The argument from the tendency of the doctrine.

If we were to say that the apparent tendency of a sentiment should in all cases be held decisive of its real character and truth, we should doubtless be going too far. With our limited and imperfect knowledge, we may not always be competent judges on such a point; we may ourselves be misled by error, or blinded by our feelings. Yet there are grounds on which an inquiry into the tendency of an opinion is both reasonable and important. Everything which is just in sentiment must also be right in tendency; rectitude in sentiment being nothing more than a view of things as they really exist, and things as they really exist being adapted by divine wisdom to exert a right influence on the heart. If an opinion, therefore, according to its legitimate use, tends apparently to evil, this is presumptive evidence of its fallacy; as, on the other hand, there is a presumption in favour of its truth if it tends to good. Though this is not to be considered as a principal argument, it is an important auxiliary one; and it is proper that every sentiment should be brought to this test, as a help towards ascertaining its character.

With respect to the accordance of religious opinions with the truth of the Gospel in this point, we have considerable facility of judgment. The divine dispensation of mercy has very distinct and peculiar features. Its aspect is by no means vague or equivocal. By virtue of its boundless condescension and riches of grace, its tendencyi s manifestly to abase man and to exalt his Maker. To the former is allotted shame and confusion of face, deep criminality and ill-desert; to the latter is ascribed unbounded and self-moved love, as the sole spring of all that is happy for man or excellent in him. It is an easy and effectual mode, therefore, of bringing a doctrine to the test, to ask what is its tendency. Does it abase the sinner? Does it glorify God? Does it breathe the acknowledged spirit of his dispensation of grace?

The writer cannot help picturing to himself the surprise

which one class of his readers may feel, at his bringing the doctrine he has endeavoured to maintain to the test now described; or the joy which may be felt by others, in the anticipation of his approaching discomfiture. There is scarcely a point in which our brethren who oppose the sentiment of man's ability imagine themselves so strong as in this. They conceive that the notion we advocate tends to exalt the creature; and they take this to be so entirely beyond doubt, that on this ground its condemnation is with them already past. They may be assured, however, that they proceed too rapidly. With the semblance of an impregnable fortress, they have no real strength. We have not the least unwillingness to bring our doctrine to this test; on the contrary, we are very desirous of it, being fully convinced that the result will be eminently in its favour. If it do not tend to humble man and to glorify God, let it perish and be forgotten!

I. Let us then recall the sentiment itself, that our view of it may be accurate. We maintain that man, in his present condition, possesses power to be what he ought to be, understanding by power the means of being so. In order to guard against the perplexity which may arise from the frequent analogical use of the word power, it may perhaps be better to use the word means, as strictly of the same import. Our inquiry is, first, whether the idea that man possesses the means of being what he ought to be tends to exalt or humble him.

Now it appears evident that the ascription to man of means of being what he ought to be, must have the effect of exhibiting him as guilty if he is not what he ought to be. Even upon the supposition of our brethren (which, however, we do not admit), that man may be guilty in some measure though he have no means of being otherwise than he is, it seems plain that if he have such means his guilt must be greater; and greatest of all according to the opinion which ascribes to him the amplest means. To say that a man does not love God when he cannot, may be to say a bad thing of him; but to say that he does not love God when he can, is surely to say of him something worse: or, which is the same thing, to affirm that man has power to love God is to represent him in a light which aggravates his guilt, and tends more deeply to abase him.

Yet all we have maintained is that man has the means of being what he ought to be; an opinion which, instead of exalting a sinner, has so direct a tendency to humble him, that whoever desires to abase him most deeply should obviously maintain it with the greatest emphasis.

It can scarcely be less wonderful that this consequence should ever have been overlooked; but it may perhaps be ascribed to the influence of one or other of the following fallacies.

1. It may be thought by some that power is an excellency; and that to ascribe power to man is to ascribe goodness to him.

The error committed here lies in not observing the distinction between man as a creature, and man as a moral agent; or between natural and moral qualities. Looking at any creature, as such, the possession of power, or the means of action, is an excellency; and every increase of power adds to its excellency, inasmuch as it confers an adaptation for some superior kind of action. So the power of performing moral actions is an excellency in man, enabling him to do what other creatures cannot. But when we regard man as a moral agent, and ask wherein his excellency as such consists, it is not in power, but in the right use of power; not in having means of action, but in acting well. Power is a natural excellence, but not a moral one; an excellence of structure, but not of character. It is excellence, but not goodness: and therefore to ascribe power to man is not to ascribe to him any goodness at all.

That this is the true idea of power, or means of action, may appear more fully from this, that the employment of it is not necessarily good. Power may be used for evil, and it is in many cases so used; so that it might in these cases be regarded as an evil itself. The fact is, however, that power has no moral character at all; it is neither evil nor good, but a mere instrument of action, by the varied employment of which good or evil character is formed and exhibited.

2. It may be alleged, perhaps, that, if power itself be not a moral excellency, power to do good must be so.

But what then is power to do good? According to our definition of power, it is the means of doing good, and nothing more. But is the possession of the means of doing good a moral excellency? A rich man has the means of being

charitable; is this any goodness in him? If this question needs no answer, so neither does the following: A wicked man has the means of serving God; is this any goodness in him? The same principle decides both cases. The means of doing good constitute no moral excellency, but merely a natural one; and they may in fact be rendered only means of doing evil, by the neglect or misuse of them. When we say that man has power to do good, therefore, we do not ascribe to him any moral excellency.

3. It may be said that disposition is power, and disposition to do good is goodness.

Most certainly disposition to do good is goodness; but the reader will be kind enough to recollect that we do not allow power and disposition to be the same. If he is disposed to go over that ground again, we can only refer him to chap. ii. page 49.

4. It may be urged that all power is declared to be of God; and that, therefore, if power be ascribed to man, it is derogatory to the glory of God.

There is no doubt but all things are of God. Every creature is endowed by his hand with whatever faculties it possesses, and is entirely dependent upon him for their continuance. In this sense our power to act at all is of God; so likewise is our power to breathe, and our power to do evil as well as good. If, therefore, it is any way derogatory to God's honour to say that man has power to do good, it must be equally so to say that he has power to do evil, or to perform any of the functions of life. In fact, however, there is nothing dishonourable to God in either. Whatever powers God has given us we possess; and to say what powers we possess is to say in other words what powers God has given us. To describe man *as he is* implies no question as to his origin, nor any insinuation of his independent existence.

When the power by which man works righteousness is said to be of God, it is necessary to recollect the double import of the term. An application of the principle by which the use of words is to be ascertained, will show that the term power is here used analogically, not in reference to the means of acting, but to the disposition to act. And if this be the case, all language of this kind is remote from the question; as we do not ascribe to man any disposition to act right, but simply the means of doing so. The fact,

therefore, that God gives man the disposition to serve him by a special communication of grace, argues nothing respecting the means of serving him which he still may or may not possess by nature.

To return from these digressions. In ascribing to man the means—that is, the power—of loving and serving God, we do nothing to exalt him, but everything to abase him. Let the sentiment we maintain be compared in this respect with that which is opposed to it. Affirm that man has no power to act right: does that abase him? It lowers him, indeed, by denying the principal attribute which raises him above the brutes, but it does not disgrace him; it sinks his nature, but it does not impugn his character. Upon this principle, in order to humble man more we should say that he has no power to think, none to reason, none to admire, none to be happy; and let us only go on in the same direction, and we may ultimately reduce him to an oyster or a zoophyte. Profoundly humiliating indeed! But all this while what charge of *guilt* is fixed on him? What *blame* is attached to him? Of what *criminality* does he stand convicted? Absolutely none. Every diminution of his power, on the contrary, removes him further from the possibility of being either evil or good, and, with the incapacity of an oyster, he attains also its innocence.

To deny power to man, therefore, is a preposterous method of attempting to abase him. But this is not all. The species of power which our brethren refuse to ascribe to man is precisely that which is necessary to his being humbled, and without a consciousness of which he can never feel any abasement at all. They affirm that man has not the power, or the means, of doing good, or of avoiding evil; in which case we maintain it to be impossible that a man should feel himself blameworthy, either for doing evil, or for not doing good. Whatever a man may be accused of, a sincere and honest conviction that he had not the means of doing otherwise always amounts to a full justification of himself in his own eyes, and must do so while his rational constitution remains unimpaired. Upon such a ground as this, therefore, no feeling of humiliation can ever arise.

The state of things which thus opens to us is truly admirable. Here are men who profess to hold doctrines abasing to the creature, and who cry down a contrary sentiment

because it exalts him; while the doctrine they espouse annihilates the possibility of blame, and furnishes the sinner with a complete justification; and that which they oppose not only carries the guilt of the sinner to the highest pitch, but affords the only ground on which he can be convicted of criminality at all. Under what infatuation can it be, that, professing to maintain the deep criminality of transgression, they seize upon that on which the very existence of criminality depends, and strive to blot it out alike from the records of truth, and from the conscience of man? Allow that man has power to choose his character and conduct, and you may hold him blameworthy; deny this, and, let him be what he may, he is innocent. Yet this is the very thing which is singled out for denial. That is the doctrine, therefore, which exalts the creature; for it enables him to look with complacency on his heart and life, with all their iniquities; to justify himself, notwithstanding all the accusations of the law of God; and even to lift up his head with insult in the presence of his Maker and his judge. Ours is the doctrine to abase man, and is the only doctrine which attaches to him a particle of real criminality. If he has power to serve God, then disobedience is a crime—the sinner himself cannot but allow it to be so, and a crime fully proportionate to the vastness of his obligations.

Let the influence of the two sentiments be embodied in two hypothetical cases. Let us imagine that we hear one person in a soliloquy of the following kind. "They tell me that I have sinned. They speak awfully of my breaking God's commandments, and of the punishment hereafter to be inflicted upon me. They say I ought to be deeply ashamed of myself; but I could not help it. Sin is natural to me. It is in my constitution, and I have no power to be otherwise than I am. If I am to be otherwise than I am, therefore, the Lord must make me so. It is unreasonable to blame *me;* for I have done the very best I could, and certainly cannot blame myself."

We have carefully avoided in this case the use of all strong expressions, lest we should be supposed to have overcharged the picture. Let us now hear a soliloquy of a different kind. "I know that I ought to love God and to serve him; that I can do both; and that, with due consideration of his Word, I should have done both ere now. It is certain that I have

never meditated seriously on the contents of the Bible. I have bent my attention to the world; I have voluntarily avoided everything adapted to render me serious; I have cherished an aversion to God and his ways; I have said to him, Depart from me. I have thus wilfully neglected the means of loving him. The heart which I could have given to him I have given to another. Affections which might have been engaged for him have been willingly enlisted against him, till now I hate him and his ways. Wretch that I am! Who shall express the depth of my wickedness? Is it thus that I have treated God when he called me? Is it thus I have hardened my heart against those glorious truths, which, if I had but duly meditated on them, would have melted me into gratitude and love? How justly may he look on me with anger! How righteously will his indignation burn against me, even to the lowest hell! How bitterly must I reproach myself, as voluntary in my deepest guilt, and as the author of my own ruin! O thou, my Maker and judge! wherewithal shall I come before thee? By what arguments can my conduct be justified, or by what excuses can it be extenuated?"

The reader, of course, will judge whether the natural tendency of the doctrines in question has been now fairly represented. He may easily satisfy himself that these are not fictitious cases. Let him observe the many persons around him who are not of a contrite spirit, and inquire why it is that a load of guilt like theirs occasions them no grief, and he will often have for answer, "I cannot help it; you know I cannot do any better of myself." If, on the other hand, he should ever meet with one who holds this unwelcome sentiment of man's ability, he may be reckless about sin on other grounds, but he will always say, "Well, I know I am to be blamed." Such is the influence of the two sentiments in fact; and it may not be going too far to say, that, of all the errors working mischief in the heart of man, the notion of his own inability is incomparably the most prolific source of self-complacency and religious unconcern.

II. Having seen how the doctrine of man's ability tends to abase the creature, let us now inquire, in the second place, whether it tends to glorify the Creator.

We may begin by remarking generally, that God is glorified in exactly the same proportion as man is abased; the quan-

tity of shame and confusion of face belonging to the sinner being the precise measure of the grace exercised by the Saviour. If there were no sin there could be no grace; and, by whatever degree sin is magnified, in the same proportion is grace glorified. Whatever sentiment, therefore, most humbles the sinner, most glorifies God; but we have already seen that the doctrine of man's ability most humbles the sinner, and we may conclude, therefore, that it will also most glorify God.

But to go into particulars. The glory of God in salvation, or that aspect of his glory pertaining to the present argument, consists in its being regarded as an act of grace, free, sovereign, and infinite. The true idea of grace seems to be that of undeserved bounty, kindness to the unworthy; and the degree of grace manifested obviously accords with the degree of unworthiness in the objects of it. To say that grace is free and sovereign, is to say that there is nothing in the objects of it adapted to excite it; but that it springs solely from God's own bosom, and is regulated in its exercise by his own good pleasure.

The question respecting the glory of God in salvation, therefore, resolves itself into one respecting the unworthiness of man. Is man undeserving of the kindness of God? Is he utterly undeserving of it, without anything, of whatever nature, adapted to induce it? Is his character fitted rather to repel divine mercy, and to inflame just indignation? Is his criminality so great as to render it a matter of endless wonder that he should ever be forgiven?

Let us first see how these questions can be answered, on the supposition that man has not power to be what he ought to be. The case then is simply that of a person who has fallen into some calamity without the means of avoiding it, and consequently without any fault on his part. It may certainly be deemed kind to render assistance in such a case; and, if this is the whole that God has done, we would be very far from insinuating that it is not kind, since any regard to creatures must be in him a matter of infinite condescension. Nor will we here stop to inquire whether kindness of such a description confers an eminent lustre on the character of a benefactor; whether it could furnish just occasion of exalted encomium; whether it be more than accordant with the universal law of loving our neighbour as ourselves; or

whether the omission of such a service would not attach a stigma difficult to be removed. Our object rather is to show, that, whatever grace may have been manifested on the supposition of man's incompetency, much more has been exercised on the supposition of his power.

If it be true that man has power to be and to do all that he ought, to love God supremely, to delight in him, and to serve him with all his heart, then the case is a very different one from that just exhibited. Whatever may be the wretchedness into which he may have fallen, and whatever its adaptation may be in itself to inspire compassion, this aspect of man's character towards God has a tendency to repress such a feeling. Why should his Maker rescue him? Has he not been his Maker's enemy? With ample powers for his service, has he not wilfully devoted them to the world, and trampled alike upon the commands and the mercies, the glory and the terrors of the Almighty? What favours has he not abused! What dishonour has he not aimed to inflict! And all this when he had power to do otherwise; when God had set before him the most moving truths, the consideration of which would have sweetly drawn him to love; but he would not incline his ear, neither would he hearken. Shall God save such a one? Shall not his soul be avenged on such a rebel as this? For such a wretch shall his arm be stretched out, and his Son be slain? This is a miracle of grace indeed. Love which prevails while crimes of the deepest dye provoke eternal wrath, and while justice demands the execution of a righteous vengeance—such love *is* free; it *may be* sovereign, and *must be* glorious. Such love is worthy of the Eternal; and if earth and heaven be called upon to shout its praise, the theme is infinitely higher than the song.

The writer cannot believe it needful to carry this illustration any further. He will leave it to appeal to every pious mind, only expressing his heartfelt delight that the sentiments he holds do lead him to most admiring views of the grace that bringeth salvation. O! if he felt that there were any sentiments which could sink him in deeper shame before the presence of his Maker, or inspire more elevated apprehensions of his Redeemer's love, were it for this luxury alone, he would instantly embrace them. It is for this reason, in truth, that he binds his present sentiments to his heart. None humble him like these; none like these inspire him with adoration of his Lord.

If a reader of the opposite persuasion should feel any force in the preceding argument, it may perhaps lead him to say—"But, after all, the great question is, Is the sentiment true? Is it scriptural?" No doubt this is the great question; and he will have the goodness to recollect how fully it has been treated in the former parts of this volume. It is not that we have examined our opinion in this indirect manner, in order to avoid the direct application of scriptural tests; but, having first applied them, we use this as a subsidiary means; and, as the former justified us, so does the latter. It should be recollected also, that we are now upon ground which our companions in argument have claimed as peculiarly their own, and from which, as their impregnable bulwark, they have loudly proclaimed our defeat. We wish no triumph, neither let them practise any evasion; but let it be fairly decided which sentiment has the advantage on the ground now occupied. Nothing is easier than for a man, who is determined to maintain his opinion at all hazards, when baffled at one point to run to another, and so to lead an everlasting chase: but, if there be any sincerity in the reference so often made to the tendency of the doctrine, we call upon our brethren either to show that it is not such as we have stated, or to abandon, if not their opinion, yet their boast; and to content themselves with being that portion of the Christian church who hold sentiments which justify man, and annihilate the grace of God.

CHAPTER XIV.

Whether the sentiment of man's ability agrees with the actual exercises of his mind:—The argument from experience.

It can scarcely fail to have occurred to our readers, that the subject before us is by no means one, either of abstract speculation, or of remote inquiry. It relates to matters which lie within our own breasts; to matters, therefore, respecting which our own consciousness should afford us the means of forming a ready and decisive judgment. One can

scarcely withhold surprise that, on so home a topic, there should have existed either diversity of opinion or scope for argument; and, if it does exist, it is natural and just to refer to every man's consciousness of what passes within him for a decision of the question. Whatever may be the value of philosophical disquisitions, whatever may be the force even of divine testimony, they are of no further influence or truth than as they accord with the facts existing in the bosom of men. The use and end of them is not to produce a fictitious man, but to discover the real one; not to form a picture, but to exhibit a light. Respecting the whole question in the discussion of which we have been engaged, we say most cheerfully, Let experience decide it.

Much is it to be regretted that any circumstance should diminish the value of this appeal. Some readers, perhaps, under the influence of their own consciousness, may be ready to say that, on this ground, there cannot be two opinions, at least among those who are taught of God. The expectation is natural, but the fact does not justify it. There *are* two opinions, even among those who are taught of God; unless, indeed, the parties in this discussion proceed to the extreme length of pronouncing each other not to be Christians—an anathema which, from angry and defeated disputants, is no way uncommon, but which, in this case, we will not suppose to be hurled on either side. Since, then, those who have alike experienced divine teaching do not come to a perfect agreement upon this point, it is manifest that the appeal to experience cannot be made in the rapid and decisive manner which might have been anticipated. We shall need to advance with caution and discrimination. We shall, however, need no more than this. The ground for the appeal to experience is not at all affected by the different views which may be taken of it. No doubt can be entertained that the inward exercises of all true Christians, though greatly diversified, are substantially the same; and that they are spoken of in dissimilar terms, only because those terms are employed with more or less strictness and accuracy. We have seen already that a lax and unobservant use of words is the origin of many of the doctrinal perplexities involved in the present discussion; and we need not be at all surprised to find the same cause operating to disguise and distort the exercises of the heart. Let us only rectify these inadver-

tencies; let us but ask candidly what certain phrases mean, and reduce them fairly to their correct import, and then we shall hear distinctly what the testimony of experience really is.

Before we proceed to inquire of those to whom the Lord has been gracious, we wish to ask a few questions of the ungodly themselves. Of such among them as would affirm that they have ability for their duty, we have no need here to speak; whether correct or not, their testimony is at all events on our side. We refer now to those who say they cannot do as they ought; language which is very often heard from some persons, especially when they have been induced to make any of those abortive religious efforts with which the lives of many abound. Supposing the reader to be cherishing such a sentiment, we use the freedom of addressing him personally, and say—What do you mean when you declare that you cannot love God, or repent of sin? What hinders you? The question perhaps may startle and perplex you; you may be disposed to reply to it by saying again that you cannot, and that you cannot tell why; but we must repeat our inquiry. If you cannot repent, something hinders you, and something which may be discovered, if you will look closely and speak honestly. What is it? Judge if we are not right in saying, that it is your love of sin, of the world, and of self-indulgence. This makes you dread the influence of religious truths, and deeply disrelish the consideration of them. You know there is no other hindrance. You could love and serve God, if your own heart—that is, if you yourself—were willing. But, if this be the case, then you have power to do it; for, if you had not, you could not do it although you were willing.

If you still say, But how can I help the state of my heart, or my averseness to repent, we answer, that you have the means of altering the state of your heart by the due consideration of religious truths. *Consider*, and you will be wise. Your experience will confirm this representation. For we ask, Have you ever given to religious truths the serious and practical consideration which you knew they deserved? If you have not, how can you say that such consideration would not have converted you? Again, have religious truths ever been seriously thought of by you with-

out producing some effect, and an effect proportionate to the degree of consideration you may have given them? How else are we to account for the hours of anxiety, the bursts of sorrow, the occasional prayers and purposes of amendment, which your memory will readily recall? And, if this be the case, as we are satisfied it is, it may fairly be reckoned a decisive proof that due consideration would have converted you, and that by this instrument you have the means of changing your own heart. Further; How have religious truths at any time failed to influence you, or lost the influence which they were beginning to exert upon you? You know that it has been by inconsideration. When they were brought before you, you took no pains to weigh them, but rather willingly forgot them, or perhaps indulged yourself in some method of taking off their force; and, when they have made you in some measure serious or unhappy, the impression was lost by forgetfulness, if not by a method more flagrantly criminal. We are not afraid of your experience contradicting these statements; and, if it do not, we have its unequivocal testimony to the sentiment that every man possesses ability for his duty. You, at least, possess ability for yours.

In harmony with the principle we are maintaining are those well-attested instances in which conversion has more manifestly been induced by reflection. We hear, for example, of a traveller at an inn engaging to reward a servant, if she will promise to spend in prayer a quarter of an hour every day till his return; and a dying mother in India, who enjoined her son to spend half an hour every morning in solitary reflection. In both these cases conversion resulted; and there are doubtless many similar ones. These are direct testimonies to the adaptation and power of religious truth to affect the heart whenever it is duly regarded; and they authorize the broad assertion, that it is impossible for any man to continue in sin, who steadily contemplates the motives which are adapted to win him from it—he must disregard them, or he will infallibly repent.

Perfectly accordant with this view is the language of Holy Writ, in which we suppose every true Christian will be ready to describe his own conversion: "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies," Psalm cxix. 59. Thoughtfulness is the first of all hopeful signs; and it will

be fully admitted, we imagine, that conversion commences and is carried on by the influence of clear, vivid, and powerful views of divine things, that is to say, by having the attention deeply engaged on them. Then what was seldom thought of becomes ever present, it cannot be forgotten; and the more intently it is dwelt upon the deeper becomes the conviction of its importance, and the more decided its influence upon the heart.

Let us now request a devout reader to examine how it is with him in his closet. On his entrance there it may be conceived that he finds a painful degree of worldly-mindedness and insensibility to divine things, much deadness of heart, and perhaps an entanglement of his affections with some sinful object. An hour spent in fervent exercises of secret piety awakens his heart, destroys the fascination of sin, and brings him near to God. But what are the exercises which have produced this result? They are greatly diversified, no doubt; but they are in substance only two, meditation and prayer—one grand object of prayer also being that the heart may be enlarged and quickened in meditation. The great power of religious retirement lies in its adaptation to set before us the glories of the world to come, to exhibit them distinctly, and to engage on them a full and solemn attention. To this point the labours of closet piety are mainly directed, and only so far as it is attained is any benefit derived from them. Hence the value and importance of the perusal of the Divine Word, of examination of the heart, of a review of the Lord's dealings with us, and of an observation of our ever-varying circumstances; and hence, in truth, one great part of the value of prayer itself; which, above all other exercises, brings us into close contact with eternal realities, or cuttingly convicts us of our thoughtlessness in the very presence of those awful things by which our whole hearts ought to be absorbed. If there be any particular object to be attained, as, for example, some special sin to be mortified, we look at it in the various lights in which its guilt, ingratitude, folly, and mischief, appear most conspicuous: when these fix our attention strongly, the resolution to mortify that sin is produced and confirmed, and not till then. It is the same in every other case; and it is wholly on this principle that we rest the truth of the general sentiment, which universal experience confirms, that the vigour

and growth of piety are always proportionate to the extent and liveliness of its secret exercises, or, in other words, to the attention engaged by the objects to which piety itself relates.

It may perhaps be observed, that we have hitherto made no mention of those gracious aids of the Spirit, which are exerted in conversion, and are enjoyed in devotional retirement; and we may even be asked whether our plan leaves any room for them. Our answer is briefly this: We entertain the fullest conviction that all holy emotions and enlargement of heart in meditation arise from the influence of the Holy Spirit, and are never enjoyed without it. We conceive, however, that his work is not to render meditation effectual to touch the heart, which it would do without him, and must do from the very constitution of man; but to induce meditation itself, to fix our thoughts intently on divine things, which we never should do without him. His office, as described in Holy Writ, is to "take of the things of Christ, and show them unto us," John xvi. 14. The import of many of the petitions we address to him is, that he will "turn away our eyes from beholding vanity," and not suffer vain thoughts to lodge within us, Psalm cxix. 37. And such is his actual course of proceeding; for, whenever he does produce deep exercises of heart, it is by enlarged views of sacred objects. The use thus made by the Spirit himself of consideration, as the instrument for accomplishing all his purposes in the conversion, consolation, and sanctification of men, is a manifest proof of its adequacy and certain efficacy: as, on the one hand, it is impossible to conceive he would employ an instrument not fitted for its end, so, on the other, it is evident that the instrument answers all the ends for which he employs it. Let but the same instrument be similarly employed, it matters not by what hand, and it will produce the same result. Hence may be seen, therefore, the relation and the consistency between the asserted ability of man and the aid of the Spirit. The Spirit does nothing more than lead us to due consideration; but we are able to give due consideration to any object without the Spirit; wherefore we have power, without the Spirit, to do that which we actually do only under his influence. The only instrument which the Spirit uses is one which we also have power to use; wherefore we have also power to accomplish all that is

wrought by it; the sole reason why we do not being our aversion to the use of the only instrument by which it can be effected.

If it should be thought that the province thus assigned to the blessed Spirit is too small and insignificant, let any Christian observant of his own mind ask himself whether he can in fact ascribe to him any more. We do not hesitate for a moment to ascribe to this blessed agent all our consolation, our sanctification, our heavenly-mindedness, and every other good thing; but we conceive that he produces them by means of the truth; and the real question is, whether he effects these gracious results with or without this instrumentality. Whatever good work he carries on in the heart, is it not by the Divine Word, exhibited and applied for this purpose? Such is the tenor of our Saviour's prayer—"Sanctify them *through thy truth*, thy Word is truth," John xvii. 17; and such, we believe, is the uniform testimony of Christian experience. Now, if the work of the Spirit is carried on by the Word of Truth, it must be carried on also by the understanding and consideration of man, which form the only avenue by which the truth can reach or affect the heart. Besides, when we say that the office of the Spirit is to lead to consideration, we say a thing by no means insignificant, but very much the reverse; for, in relation to the formation of character and the determination of conduct, consideration is everything. He who can fix my attention upon various objects according to his pleasure, has the key of my inmost heart, and, so far as those objects are adapted to exert an influence, can mould it to his will. Nor is it so small a matter as may be supposed. Let any man try his strength at this occupation, and see how much he can do towards fixing the attention of a person on subjects to which he is averse, or even indifferent, and he will soon learn how little it is. Above all, let him try to engage the close and continued regard of a wicked man to the things of religion, and he will ere long acknowledge that it is no trifling task, that it altogether exceeds the resources of human power, and, little as it seems, is highly worthy of the almighty and glorious agent who condescends to perform the deed.

Here we may perhaps be met by the suggestion, that among the first lessons of divine wisdom is that of our own helplessness. Most cordially do we concur in this sentiment.

It *is* among the earliest truths that the Spirit teaches; he who has not learned it is wanting in the very elements of spiritual knowledge, and, if there were any system with which this should be found to be uncongenial, it would be effectually refuted by this circumstance alone. We are not altogether strangers to the *feeling* of helplessness, and the deep anguish with which, not only an awakened sinner, but a true Christian, often acknowledges that, like a helpless captive, he can do nothing. As to holy exercises apart from the influence of the Spirit, we daily feel them to be impossible; nor do we think that any persons use these terms either with more freeness, or with more force, than ourselves. But we have already seen that the use of these terms is by no means decisive of the question at issue. They have a twofold use, and a twofold meaning. It requires therefore to be asked what we mean by them; and this is the more necessary, because only one of their significations is at all appropriate to the connexion in which they are employed. Some persons tell us that, when they use these expressions, they mean to acknowledge that they are without power to do what is good; others, and ourselves among them, by the same language mean that their hearts have a fixed opposition to it. If we are complained of for using the language in this sense, we not only justify ourselves, but make the same complaint against our brethren; for, in truth, we use the terms in their usual sense, and in the only sense which they can rightly bear. We have already established the principle that, when these words are applied to a state of mind, they invariably denote determination and not power; and we hold it to be certain that, in this connexion, they do refer to a state of mind, and nothing else: in the case before us, therefore, they can mean nothing but a fixed determination, and persons who use them to denote an imagined want of power are guilty both of a flagrant perversion of language and of endeavouring to express what really does not exist.

For, when the matter comes to be examined, it will be found that, with whatever force we may use the terms cannot and impossible, we do not really mean that we are destitute of power. Suppose me to say, in heartfelt bitterness, "Wretch that I am! How little do I mourn for sin, or love the Saviour! I cannot mourn, I cannot love. As soon may the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots,

as I, who have been long doing evil, learn to do well!" What is the real case which I thus describe? It is the intensity of a certain state of mind, and nothing more; a case, therefore, from which the idea of power is altogether remote. I mean only that my feelings are desperately opposed to sorrow for sin and love to Christ. Neither is it a case which we are without the power—that is, the means—of altering. Due consideration of the truths adapted to produce sorrow for sin and love to Christ will produce them. Hence, accordingly, if we really wish to possess these feelings, we betake ourselves to this very means; as though we should say, "Come, my soul, look at those heartrending iniquities which grieve thee so little, and lift up thine eyes to the glorious Redeemer whom thou hast found it so hard to love! Wilt thou never melt?" It is in the midst of such exercises as these that the heart is subdued; nor does it ever yield by any other means than the contemplation, in some method or other, of truths adapted to produce the effect. We may confidently appeal to every Christian to say, whether the awakening and increase of devotional feeling is not always proportionate to the exercise of sacred meditation.

To this it may be added, that, if it were strictly true that we had no power, we could attach to ourselves no blame. If we had been endeavouring to lift an immense weight, and, after our utmost exertion, had ascertained that we could not do it, we should be far from covering ourselves with reproaches, and exclaiming, "Oh! guilty creature that I am!" We should rather resign ourselves to the result, however calamitous, without any feeling of self-reproof. This, indeed, is precisely what some professors do with regard to experimental piety. "I am lukewarm," say they, "and too worldly-minded, I know: but I cannot help it; I can do nothing of myself; I must wait till the Lord pleases to visit me." But what sort of religious experience are we to call this? To us it appears to be one of the most fearful signs of religious declension and prevailing sin. At all events, Paul's experience was very different when he said, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And equally different be ours, and that of all our readers! Is it ever well with us, but when the evils of the heart are matter of deep affliction and severe self-reproach? But if this feeling be just, it cannot be a case in

which we are without power; for, in such a case, no just self-reproach could exist.

Should any reader be disposed to question whether the existence of an evil disposition merely, without the want of power, can constitute such total helplessness and impossibility as we feel, he may notice two points. In the first place, no other cause of our helplessness exists, or can be conceived to exist; and those who maintain it never do, and never can, explain themselves. In the next place, the influence exerted by adverse feeling is exactly proportioned to its strength. Only suppose a case, therefore, in which adverse feeling is of immense force, strong enough to lead a man to disregard all that might subdue it, and then the influence and result of it are as great and as certain as though his very power were destroyed. Exactly such is the state of our hearts towards God; and hence the feeling, so characteristic of Christian experience, of helplessness combined with criminality. This combination cannot be accounted for, we may say it cannot exist, upon any principle but that which maintains both the depravity and the ability of man.

Upon no ground have we been more astonished at the resistance made to the admission of man's ability for his duty, than this on which we have now touched. We suppose it is as truly characteristic of divine teaching to learn that we are guilty, as to learn that we are helpless. Is any man taught of God, who has not felt himself justly chargeable with *sin*, with actual conduct and a state of heart which are *wrong*, and for which he *deserves* blame and condemnation? We suppose we may safely set this down as one of the elementary lessons in the school of Christ. But if a man believes this, we venture to affirm that he does *not* believe himself destitute of power to have been a different man; because, if he did, he could not feel himself justly blameable for sin. While we continue of sound mind, we can never give up this dictate of common sense, that we are not blameworthy for what we could not help; and, if we are really convinced that we could not help hating God and his authority, we never shall blame ourselves for doing so. How these two incompatible ideas get into the minds of some pious people, and dwell peaceably together, we cannot imagine, except by attributing to them a want of thought with which we are sorry any of them should be chargeable.

If a person under first awakenings and deep convictions of sin were told that he could not help sinning, he would not believe it—at that time no man believes it: so far as the idea gains any practical influence upon the heart, it diminishes the sense of guilt, and, carried fairly out, would destroy it entirely. We have conversed with various persons upon this point, and once found a professor, not wanting in shrewdness, who went on to the inference that sin is no fault at all; and, however others may strive to evade the formality of coming to so strange a conclusion, little doubt can be entertained that the notion of human inability has exerted a wide and lamentable influence, in banishing from the experience of Christians a sense of criminality. We think any close observer will allow, that among the professors of the present day there is much less of this feeling than there ought to be, and we unhesitatingly regard it as the offspring of this mischievous falsehood.

It has been conceived that a distinction between will and power is drawn by the apostle, where he says, "To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. The good that I would I do not, but the evil that I would not, that I do," Rom. vii. 18, 19. For the illustration of this passage the reader is requested to consider the following remarks.

In our account of the structure and operation of the mind, we have pointed out the difference between the habitual prevailing state of the heart, and the transient excitements to which it is subject; the latter are affections or emotions, the former is the disposition. The distinct operation of these upon the conduct may be worthy of a moment's observation. If the emotions excited should be always in harmony with the existing disposition, then there would be no possibility of an action in any degree contrary to the disposition itself; but, if there should arise emotions of a different tendency, then there might be, and, without watchful effort, there would be, an action not corresponding to the disposition. Human nature is so constituted that such emotions may arise. So it was with man in innocence, and so it is still. Hence results an especial and continual conflict in the renewed man; the disposition being holy, but the heart being also liable to the excitement of unholy emotions, under the immediate influence of which sin may be actually com-

mitted, and the accomplishment of the settled purpose of the mind be frustrated. This is the state of things which we conceive the apostle to be illustrating in the latter part of the seventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans. "I would do good," says he: "to will is present with me; I delight in the law of God after the inward man," ver. 18, 19, 22. These expressions represent his disposition, or the habitually prevailing state of his heart, which dictated a holy and devoted conduct, and gave this character to his life. He found, however, "another law in his members," an inclination to sin, "warring against the law of his mind," ver. 23; and the emotions produced in consequence of this were sometimes strong enough to prevent the fulfilment of his holy and devoted purposes; hence he says, "the good that I would I do not, and the evil that I would not, that I do: to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not," ver. 18, 19; I am not watchful, and prompt, and vigorous enough, to maintain inviolate the great purpose of my soul. The whole passage appears to us to be remote from the question of power; it describes nothing more than a conflict of feelings.

CHAPTER XV.

Objections answered.

Our argument has not been pursued thus far, without meeting with some of the topics commonly adduced in the form of objections to the sentiment of man's ability. We trust satisfactory attention has been paid to these as they occurred; but there are some others of considerable prominence, which it would be improper to overlook.

1. It has been conceived that, if man's power to come to Christ be allowed, nothing will remain to prevent him from actually coming; and this would be contrary to the Scriptures, which, at all events, declare that no man *will* come to Christ, except the Father draw him.

We believe, in the most unequivocal and decided manner,

that no man ever did, or ever will come to Christ unless drawn by the Father; and, if the sentiment of man's ability were inconsistent with this belief, we could hold it no longer.

The objection, however, proceeds upon a principle which may be shown to be fallacious. The argument is this: "Allow that a man can come to Christ, and then he will come; or, at least, you cannot be sure that he will not:" that is to say, all that a man can do he will do; or, at least, there is nothing that he can do which you can be sure he will not do. This is manifestly false. Of the many things which a man can do, he may do some, and leave others undone; nay, he infallibly will do so; and what he will do, and what he will leave undone, may be infallibly known by any being who can search his heart. Take any action that you please out of those which a man can perform, it does not follow that he will perform it: nay, we *may* be infallibly assured that he never will perform it.

The fact is, that, in order to the performance of any action, two conditions are essentially necessary; the one is the possession of power, or the means of performing it, and the other is an inclination to do so. If it be to walk into the street, or to rise from my chair—I shall never do this if I have not power to do it; but neither shall I do it, although I have power, unless I have inclination. Power is not of itself active; it is merely the means of acting, and it sleeps till inclination arouses it. A disinclination to rise from my chair will as certainly prevent my doing so as if I wanted power, since it nullifies one of the conditions essential to the action; so that, if by any means you can ascertain how long my disinclination to do so will last, you may predict with an infallible certainty that so long I shall not rise from my chair.

This familiar illustration we have taken for the purpose of setting the principle in a clear light; but the principle itself will be found to extend to all our actions, the greatest and most important not excepted. Our coming to Christ depends upon two conditions: first, our power to come; secondly, our inclination to come. We certainly shall not come if we have not power; neither, if we have power, shall we come if we have not inclination. If we have power, therefore, still it may be true that we shall never come to Christ, because we may never have an inclination to do so.

The whole question, therefore, whether a man who has power to come to Christ ever will come, resolves itself into this, What is the state of his inclination? Is he inclined to come? Or is he indifferent, yet willing to consider why he should come? Or is he disinclined to come, but only to such a degree that he still is ready to listen and reflect? Or is his disinclination so strong as to become the habitual and prevailing state of his heart, and to induce a determined disregard of all that might influence him? If the state of a man's mind be such as is described in the earlier of these questions, then we may perchance see the wonder of one coming to Christ of himself; but if it be truly represented by the last of them, it is plain that he never will come of himself, his disinclination leading to the abandonment of the only method by which he might be brought to such a result.

We have only to ask, then, whether the state of a man's mind can be known in this respect; and, if so, what it is. We have all of us means of estimating the inclinations of others and our own to some extent, but not so far as to speak certainly of what will or will not be done, either by others or ourselves. There is one being, however, though only one, to whom all hearts are open; and to him it is fully known whether any man will of himself come to Christ. He has given us the advantage of his knowledge in his Holy Word, which teaches us that no man ever will so come. We might quote much to this effect; but the sum is, that God, who knows the end from the beginning, has forewarned us that the evil disposition of a sinner will, in every case, induce him to reject the Saviour.

What more does the objector want, to satisfy him of this melancholy truth, and to relieve him of his fears that some poor sinner may come to Christ of himself? Why should he deem it necessary to add to this impediment another, consisting in the want of power? One would be ready to imagine that he does not believe the divine testimony, that he cannot think any man will be so mad, or so wicked, as to keep aloof from Christ if he has power to come to him, and that he finds a difficulty in entertaining so dreadful an opinion of another, or of himself. There is probably more of this scepticism at the bottom of the efforts made to maintain the inability of man than its advocates are aware of. But let them open their eyes to it; and, if this be their real

feeling, let them manfully avow it. If they will fairly place themselves among the advocates of human goodness; if they will maintain that there are such remnants of right feeling in a corrupt heart, that a sinner really would of himself turn to Christ if a want of power were not superadded to prevent him, then we shall know where they are, and in what company to find them. We do not believe, however, that they will do this; but, really, we have all of us need to acquire more just and humbling views of the "nest of serpents" which sin has generated in every man's bosom.

2. Akin to this objection is another, namely, that, if man is allowed to possess power to be what he ought to be, there is no ground for maintaining the necessity of the Spirit.

We should feel the force of this objection, if power were the only condition necessary to the performance of an action; but, if there be any other condition necessary also, the necessity of the Spirit's influence may surely be maintained in reference to that, although not in reference to power. It has already been shown that a second condition is necessary to the performance of every action, namely, inclination; and whether the influence of the Spirit is or is not necessary to produce such an inclination must depend upon the state of the mind itself. If, as we have maintained, the state of man's heart be such that an inclination to turn to Christ will never arise in it, then the necessity of the Spirit's influence may be intelligibly and justly affirmed. Those who do not coincide in this conclusion must be supposed to hold, either that inclination is not necessary to action, or that the inclination of man is not hopelessly averse from God; and they are welcome to either alternative.

Whether that kind of necessity for the influence of the Holy Spirit which arises from the disinclination of the sinner be that which the Scriptures exhibit, is a question which has elsewhere been considered. We will here only repeat our conviction that this is the fact. They do not represent any impediment as obstructing a sinner's conversion but his unwillingness; they cannot, therefore, recognize any other cause as originating the necessity of the Spirit's work.

3. A third objection to the doctrine of human ability has been raised, on the ground that it makes no proper allowance for the effect of the fall. No doubt, it is said, man in inno-

cence had power to love God; but, if the fall did not deprive him of this power, what has he suffered by it? Is he not in as good a condition as before?

Nothing can be more certain than that a most serious and melancholy injury was inflicted upon man by the sin and fall of our first parents; and it would be a valid objection against any sentiment that it made no proper allowance for it. But, at the same time, it is manifest that the fall did not annihilate man, nor did it destroy *all* his powers, or means of action and enjoyment. Still he retains his senses; still he is an intelligent and rational creature. It is plainly necessary, therefore, to ascertain correctly the nature and extent of the injury thus arising; it is by no means allowable to conclude that, because a great mischief has been suffered, that mischief necessarily comprehends the loss of power to do well.

What, then, was the nature of the injury resulting to man from the fall?

It may have been of one of two kinds, according to the twofold aspect in which man himself is to be regarded. Man may be considered, first, as a creature possessing certain faculties, or means of action; secondly, as a moral agent, possessing a disposition to employ those faculties in certain methods, good or evil. Now the fall may have affected man in regard to his disposition, or in regard to his faculties.

The objection alleges that the injury has fallen upon his faculties; to which we demur, for the following reasons.

(1.) The faculties of man are not injured in fact. Let it only be recollected what they are—those of perceiving, of feeling, of determining, of attending, of judging concerning good and evil; these are the faculties of man as a moral agent, those which capacitate him to do good or evil. Which of these has he lost? Manifestly none of them. If any reader doubts whether these are all the faculties necessary to moral action, we must refer him to page 30, where this subject is fully treated. We maintain them to be so; and, if they are, the fall has neither destroyed nor impaired any one of the faculties of man.

We know very well that these faculties do not, since the fall, act as they did before; but this proves no change in themselves. Their action is altogether affected by the disposition of their possessor; and to an evil disposition their

actual indolence or mis-employment is to be referred. If it should be said that disposition must then be necessary to power, we must again refer to first principles, page 49, in establishing which it has been shown that disposition is *not* necessary to power, but is totally and essentially distinct from it.

(2.) If the power of man had been injured, it would have reduced him in the scale of creatures, which is nowhere alleged to be the case.

The means of action possessed by various creatures constitute the scale on which are measured the differences by which one is distinguished from another. Creatures possessing means of action in the smallest degree are the lowest in the scale, and every one rises in proportion as these become more ample. It is the possession of means of action superior to those of any other creature on earth that places man, as a creature, at the head of them all; and he, like the rest, must rise or sink in the scale of creation, just as these may be diminished or increased. To say, therefore, that man has less power than he once had, is to say that his rank as a creature is lowered, that his place in creation is altered, and that he is somewhat nearer than he once was to the brutes that perish. But do the Scriptures ever intimate this? Most certainly not. They declare him to have fallen, not as a creature, but as a holy creature; not in nature, but in character; not in power, but in disposition. The place which he has lost is not in the scale of creation, but in that of righteousness; his fall is not from human to brute, but from divine to diabolical.

(3.) The effect of the fall upon man has been to render him sinful, which a want of power is not.

All the epithets applied to man as fallen are expressive of God's disapprobation. He is said to be corrupt, abominable, &c.; so that, whatever the effect of the fall may have been, the sinfulness of it is unquestionable. Want of power, however, cannot have the character of sin. Power is means of action; to possess which is no virtue, to be destitute of which is no crime. They may be attained in some cases by methods which were virtuous, and in others they may be lost by methods which were criminal; but even in such cases the virtue or the fault characterizes, not the state resulting, but only the steps leading to it. I am right or wrong only as I

use the power I have. The possession of less power than I had, or than my parents had, may be a calamity to me, but it cannot be a sin; but the effect of the fall has been to render me sinful; it cannot, therefore, be the loss of power which it has entailed upon me.

(4.) It may be added, that diversities of power require a corresponding diversity of treatment; whereas God treats man before the fall and after it precisely on the same principles.

That beings who possess different means of action ought not to be treated alike, but with a corresponding difference, seems an obvious dictate of reason and justice. The methods by which you endeavour to induce action should clearly be adapted to the faculties on which you work; and, if there were any difference in power between man before the fall and man after it, there should have been an equal difference in the methods of the divine conduct. Is there any such difference? Manifestly not. The circumstances are different, the motives presented are different; but the principle of treatment is identical. Innocent man was dealt with in a way of rational motive and persuasion, and with fallen man it is the same. To Adam God said, in substance, Obey my will for certain reasons; and he says the same to us. He left Adam to the result of his own thoughts, and he leaves us to the result of ours. The duties enjoined upon us respectively differ, and the reasons assigned for them, but the method of treatment does not differ at all. It is persuasion; it is the presentation of motive; it is an appeal to the understanding and the heart. Would there have been an identity of treatment if there were a diversity of power?

We need not be reminded that there is a difference in his treatment of fallen man, in relation to the promise of his Spirit. We have already shown our reasons for believing that the gift of the Spirit is not universal, nor in any way necessary to the just responsibility of man. God holds those accountable for their conduct to whom he does not give the Spirit; with these, therefore, his method of treatment is precisely the same as that which he adopted with innocent man; and we draw the inference that their power is the same.

(5.) We may observe, finally, that a loss of power is nowhere in Scripture ascribed to the fall. Every expression seemingly indicative of a want of power has, upon a just

interpretation, as we have elsewhere shown at large, a different meaning.

We shall now perhaps be asked, What effect did the fall produce?

The answer to this question must be given in two parts, according as we view the effect of the fall either on our first parents themselves, or on their posterity.

With respect to our first parents, the arrangements of the Eden covenant were such that, by the first sin, the disposition of our first parents was totally changed. Before it they were friends to God, after it they were enemies; before it their disposition was holy and heavenly, afterwards it was earthly and corrupt.

With respect to their posterity, the law of the Eden covenant was that the disposition thus wrought in our first parents should be universally inherited by their children, the germ of it being the bias towards evil with which every one would be born into the world, and its development in the earliest form of cherished voluntary action.

That the fall did produce this effect both Scripture and observation yield abundant proof, and it probably will not be disputed by our brethren in this argument: the question rather is, whether a due and sufficient effect is thus assigned to it. We maintain the affirmative—

1st. By the agreement of the sentiment with matter of fact: it being an obvious fact, that the powers of man, as a rational and moral agent, are not destroyed, while his disposition is become corrupt.

2ndly. By the impossibility, as already shown, of referring the effect of the fall to the power of man. And, if it did not touch his power, it could alight on nothing else but his disposition; the only views in which man can be regarded being these two—either as a creature possessing power, or as a moral agent possessing disposition.

3rdly. By the adequacy of the sentiment to account for all the circumstances of the case.

[1.] Take the fact, for example, that men are universally wicked, without an exception in any age or in any clime; a wicked disposition of great intensity is quite adequate to explain it. Or take this, that, although often and loudly called, no man repents, or of himself ever will repent; and such an evil disposition will account for it with equal ease.

Nor is there any case or aspect of human guilt which may not be resolved on this supposition, quite as satisfactorily as by imagining a want of power. Different as power and disposition are in themselves, they agree in this, that they are alike necessary to action; and, let either be wanting, the action is with equal certainty prevented.

[2.] Look again at the fact that God is angry with man in his present state, and calls it sin, which, upon the supposition of its being a want of power, is quite unintelligible; considering it as the indulgence of an evil disposition, the matter is perfectly plain. We have shown that disposition is a voluntary thing, and in all cases just matter of praise or blame; if, therefore, a wrong state of feeling is that which has resulted from the fall, the displeasure of God may be expressed against it with the strictest justice.

[3.] Reflect on the very strong terms in which the wickedness of human nature is described, the utter extinction of good in the heart, and the overwhelming force of evil: it needs only an evil disposition of sufficient strength to realize it all. There is no goodness in power; and therefore loss of power cannot be necessary to loss of goodness. Goodness lies wholly and exclusively in disposition; so that, if the disposition is become wholly evil, every spark of goodness has fled.

[4.] Or consider, finally, the dispensation of God towards man, how, although man has fallen, he still reasons, and pleads, and endeavours to persuade; all which, upon the supposition of the want of power, cannot be deemed less than absurd; but, if an evil disposition be that which distinguishes fallen from innocent man, everything is plain. While the rational powers of man remain, persuasion is an appropriate and sufficient means of dealing with him; whether it be successful or not, it has in itself no absurdity, no unsuitableness. It is as fit for us as it was for Adam, and lays a foundation of unquestionable justice for responsibility proportionate to the motives employed.

It appears to us fully sufficient, therefore, to maintain that the effect of the fall was to change the disposition of man, and not to destroy his power. The rectitude of his disposition we hold to be totally destroyed; his power as a moral agent to be altogether unimpaired.

4. It has sometimes been asked, how is the assertion that man has power to do good reconcilable with the doctrine of his total depravity?

The doctrine of the total depravity of man we unequivocally maintain; and in order to see how it is reconcilable with his ability to do well, it is only needful to observe wherein the true nature of depravity consists. We suppose we may take it for granted that depravity is something evil or blameworthy. Now, we have elsewhere stated (page 55) that good and evil in man have their existence only in the heart, or in the state of the feelings. If a man's feelings be right everything will be right, because the feelings regulate everything; and, if anything in his conduct be wrong, it must, on the same principle, spring from something wrong in his feelings. There is neither good nor evil in any part of man but his heart, of the state of which all his actions are but the expression; and, if this be the case, depravity is a word which can have reference to the state of the heart alone, inasmuch as it refers to something which is evil. It has no reference, therefore, to the power of man in any view of it, but solely to his disposition; and, whatever may be asserted respecting the depravity of man, his power is left wholly out of the question. He may be, and we maintain that he is, totally depraved; and yet, as we also maintain, his power may be altogether perfect and entire. What we mean by saying that a man is totally depraved is, that he has a thoroughly wrong disposition; which, it is plain, may consist with the most ample and excellent powers. If depravity means more than this, the case, of course, will be altered; but we believe we have here used the word in its correct and scriptural signification.

CHAPTER XVI.

Further objections answered.

5. It has been considered as a weighty objection to the sentiment of man's ability, that nothing is gained by it. The result, it is said, is the same. No more persons are saved; and men, after all, will not repent.

We cannot sufficiently wonder at this objection. As

though it were to be considered, in the investigation of a sentiment, whether anything would be gained by it! We are to suppose, then, that an opinion which rests upon slight evidence, or upon none at all, should be readily received if it seemed likely to yield some advantage; while another, although supported by the strongest evidence, if it have not such a recommendation, is to be rejected. We have been used to think the great question to be, what is truth; and that it is imperative in all cases to do homage to the majesty of truth, by submitting to her authority. Whether, in the exhibition we may think proper to give of truth, we shall give to any topic a more or less prominent place, may perhaps depend upon our view of its profitableness; but surely nothing that is true can rightly be rejected, or denied. To judge everything untrue which is of no apparent benefit, would be to supersede the use of evidence entirely; and the extensive application of such a rule would assign to the class of falsehoods a large portion of hitherto acknowledged truths. We deem it not too much, therefore, to insist upon an examination of the question according to its evidence, irrespectively of its issues. We ask, is it true; and shall consider every man who passes from the question by saying what do you gain by it, as unable or unwilling to meet the proof.

It can scarcely be less than presumptuous, however, to assume that a sentiment possesses no useful tendency because it is not apparent to us. We may be too blind, or too much prejudiced, to observe or appreciate it. It is much more reasonable to conclude that, if it be true, it must be useful, on the general principle that whatever is true is so (if it have any influence at all); and this might be maintained emphatically with respect to the truth of God. If the sentiment in question be true, it is a part of the truth of God; a truth which he has revealed, and one which stands connected with his methods of administration, and the eternal interests of mankind. Can any such truth be unimportant, or otherwise than of a beneficial tendency? And, if we do not see its advantage, should not this lead us rather to suspect our own ignorance than to impute folly to our Maker?

In fact, the objection itself proceeds upon a strangely contracted view of the divine dispensations. "The result is the same," says the objector, "upon your scheme as on

ours." Undoubtedly. Did any body ever think of producing a change in results? Will not the result be the same on every scheme of religious opinion? Do the various and conflicting thoughts of men affect the fulfilment of the designs of God? If it were to make us indifferent to one form of religious belief that the result would not be altered by it, this should equally make us indifferent to all its forms; for by not one of them, false or true, will results be changed. Though truth were banished from the world, God would work his sovereign pleasure. He that sets light by one opinion because no more souls will be saved by it, may for the same reason set light by every other: let him hold which he will, just the same number of sinners will be redeemed.

The importance of religious opinions lies, not only in their ultimate effect, but in their present bearing. They are valuable in proportion as they are adapted to produce a right state of mind. The test, therefore, to which the sentiment in question is justly liable, is this: Does it represent the ways of God in a light more beneficially influential than the opposite opinion? If it does, something *is* gained by it; everything, indeed, which can be gained by one sentiment in comparison with another.

That the assertion of man's ability for right action does lead to representations of God which are eminently honourable to him, needs no proof. It throws a flood of light on the justice of his commands, and the reasonableness of his expectations. It establishes beyond controversy the criminality of man, and sheds a glorious lustre on the goodness, forbearance, and redeeming love of the Almighty. It shows that all his ways are both equitable and kind, and that the whole blame of his sin and ruin lies with the transgressor himself. Are these matters of no importance? What friend of God is he, who does not rejoice in all the additional light which can be thrown upon his ways? Or are they unimportant in relation to man? Is it nothing to gain an answer to some of the many cavils by which sinners repel or evade the call to repentance? Is it nothing to fix upon their consciences a conviction of guilt, and to leave them manifestly without excuse?

But, after all, if you do this, says the objector, none of them will any more repent till the Spirit change their hearts. True, undoubtedly; but, if you are silent on this ground, let

every other topic of address be abandoned also. Why do you preach at all? No one will be converted by it, unless grace change the heart. But, if we at all appeal to sinners in a way adapted to affect them, in expectation of God's blessing, every topic adapted to such an end should be adduced, and the greatest value attached to those modes of address which are best adapted to the design. On these the greater blessing may be expected.

It seems to have been thought by some persons, that the adaptation of the Gospel to the conversion of sinners is arbitrary, a mere matter of divine appointment; that there is no fitness in the Gospel itself to accomplish the end, but that it does so only because God has been pleased to determine that it should; and that, if he had pleased, he might as well have ordained that conversion should have resulted from the teaching of geography, or from the lowing of oxen. Such an idea is fully implied, in the manner in which certain ministers justify the preaching of the Gospel to those who have no power to repent; and, on this ground, of course, they feel little inducement to adopt a mode of address because of its adaptation to convince or impress the mind. Nothing can be more derogatory to divine wisdom, or more inconsistent with obvious fact, than this idea. When the means which God has appointed for conversion are examined, they appear directly fitted to the design. Intended to operate upon an intelligent and rational creature whose feelings are to be reached through his understanding, every word of Scripture appeals to the understanding; and the whole exhibits a collection of motives, adapted to the nature of man with infinite skill, and possessing an unmeasurable and almost overwhelming power. Is it imaginable that an apparatus like this should have been employed by accident? Besides, the pursuit of an end by suitable means is one of the first dictates of wisdom. It is that which God has made every creature to do; and, in their excellencies, his creatures are the images of himself. He has so constituted us as even to deride the attempt to accomplish an object by means known to be unsuitable. And is it conceivable that, having put this impress on the whole creation, and having a boundless store of means at his command, he should, in the most glorious of all his works, and in one which he summons all intelligent beings to behold, violate his own law, and exhibit

himself in a light which it would be impossible to admire, and almost impossible not to deride?

The manner in which the influences of the blessed Spirit are imparted fully accords with the view we are taking. Much of sovereignty, doubtless, may be observed in it; but, at the same time, much of wisdom. The kind of preaching which has been made most useful has been that which was best adapted to be useful; that, namely, which has been most scriptural in sentiment, most solemn in manner, most earnest and affectionate in spirit. We may hence conclude that God chooses to work by adapted means; and that, where the means are best adapted, he will give the largest success.

If this be the case, we gain much by every approach to accuracy of sentiment. It is not only that our representations are more fitted to be useful, they are also more secure of a blessing. We are honouring God by speaking what he has bidden us, and we may hope to be honoured by him in the reception of our message. In this respect there is a high bounty attached to the rectification of our mistakes, since every improvement in handling the word of truth renders it more probable that God may employ us for good.

6. The principle we have maintained has been conceived to be inconsistent with the important doctrine of regeneration. The objection, of course, takes the following form. "Except a man be born again," as our Lord expressly affirms (John iii. 3), "he cannot see the kingdom of heaven." Now, regeneration is a work essentially and exclusively divine; consequently, without undergoing a divine process no one can be saved.

To this statement the misfortune attaches of its proving too much. If it may be justly affirmed that no sinner can be saved without undergoing a process essentially and exclusively divine, the whole apparatus of God's appeal to the active powers of mankind is thrown out of gear. Every summons to repentance and reconciliation to God is stultified, and all the encouragements and promises of the Gospel are reduced to glittering falsehoods. It is then no longer true that "whosoever confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall find mercy," "or that "whosever believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved:" since no one can be saved upon whom the divine act of regeneration is not performed. It might have been conceived that evangelical warnings and encouragements had

been intended to stimulate the moral powers of mankind; but this must not be set down as a fallacy, since no activity of the human faculties can be supposed to attain an end to which is requisite an operation essentially and exclusively divine.

Whether the abettors of this objection are disposed to go to such an extreme length as this I do not know; but, if they are, I certainly cannot go with them. I do not assail their position with a direct denial; but it is clear that an argument which leads to such a conclusion must contain a fallacy somewhere. Let us see if it can be discovered.

I observe, then, that the sacred writers use the term regeneration and its cognates, born again, begotten of God, &c., with much latitude. In some cases they mean by it the introduction of persons to a new state of happiness and privilege; as in 1 Peter i. 3—"Who hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Sometimes they use it to denote a practical religious change; as in James i. 18—"Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth." A change wrought by the influence of the Gospel can be no other than what is usually known by the name of conversion. Of the same practical change it appears to me that our Lord was speaking in his discourse with Nicodemus, John iii., of which we shall speak more particularly presently. In other cases the phrase in question is employed to denote that direct exercise of divine power upon the mind of man, by which a turn is effectually given to the current of its action, and from which a series of holy exercises immediately originates. Such is understood to be the meaning of it in John i. 12: "To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believed in his name; who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." I have drawn the attention of the reader to the various senses in which the word regeneration and its kindred terms are used in the New Testament, in order to show that it is neither just nor safe to reason as though all the passages which speak of regeneration referred to the same thing, or more particularly to that which is called regeneration in systematic theology.

Taking for the present the term regeneration in the last sense which we have quoted, as denoting a direct action of

God on the soul of man, by which the current of its action is immediately and effectually turned—and this with us is its theological import—we can perceive that an objection may be raised on two grounds.

In the first place, it may be said that regeneration is the commencement of spiritual life; and that, as the existence of spiritual life must precede the performance of spiritual actions, an unregenerate person cannot have power to perform them.

This is a very instructive instance of the facility with which mistakes may be committed, in the use of the metaphorical language with which the Scriptures abound. It will scarcely be doubted, we suppose, that the term regeneration, as applied to the operation of the Spirit of God upon the soul of man, is a metaphor. By all means let us have its true and full import, but no more. In order to ascertain this, regard should be had to the series of metaphorical representations of which it forms a part. While in sin men are said to be dead; under the influence of the Spirit of God they are said to be alive; and that exercise of his power by which this change from metaphorical death to metaphorical life is produced is appropriately called regeneration. But, dropping the metaphors, what is the actual matter which they are employed to illustrate? It is the state of a sinner's mind, and nothing more. It is the voluntary direction of a man's faculties in a course of sin which constitutes his metaphorical death; a voluntary direction of the same faculties in a course of holiness constitutes his metaphorical life; and the act of divine power which is called regeneration has precisely the effect of causing him to commence it. There being nothing in question, therefore, but a man's voluntary action, and regeneration being nothing but the origination of a new mode of voluntary action, we are entitled to reject the terms in which the objection is couched as a misuse of analogical language. With relation to life, literally understood, there can be no doubt that a body which has not life cannot perform living actions; but this does not hold good of life metaphorically spoken of. In this case the terms death and life are applied to a living being, not to denote either the presence or absence of a capacity to act, but solely the direction in which he chooses to act; so that it is a clear abuse of analogical

language to say that an unregenerate man cannot act in a holy manner—the only thing to be said is that he will not. It is plain that he can before he is regenerated; or else it would be impossible that he should begin to do so on a mere change of his state of mind.

We have said that regeneration relates exclusively to the state of a sinner's mind; we may now add, that it relates to the state of his mind in a special aspect. Let us here attend a little to a distinction which may be drawn between the state of the mind in action, and the state of the mind at rest; a distinction clearly founded in fact, and of important practical bearing.

It is manifest that there must be a period when, in reference to any given subject, no actual feeling exists, as in cases of previous ignorance; yet that, while no feeling actually exists, there may be a predisposition to some specific state of feeling in regard to it. For example, if I have unconsciously inflicted an injury, while I am ignorant of it I have no feeling concerning it; when I come to the knowledge of it, I may feel more or less sorry, or perhaps not sorry at all; but what determines the nature and degree of these feelings? Obviously, in the first instance, the state of mind previously existing; as the enmity or love I may have borne towards the particular person injured, or the tenderness I may have cherished respecting the welfare of others in general. This antecedent state of the heart powerfully predisposes to specific courses of feeling and action, and is of great importance as a constituent element of character. It is nearly allied to constitutional impulses, and other predisposing causes existing in mankind at birth; with this broad distinction, however, that these, not being voluntary, subject us to no blame. This is exemplified in infants, in whom a cause predisposing to sinful action must be held to exist, since those who live invariably do evil; but to whom, while yet incapable of any moral action, it seems impossible to ascribe sin. When we begin to exercise our affections on moral objects, we soon, by a series of actual preferences, form a habit of preferring one class to another, and so cherish an abiding or quiescent state of mind which is our own produce, and is either good or evil, according to its tendency. In point of fact, by repeated exercises of aversion from God we quickly form a habit of aversion; and this habit lies permanently in our bosom—

dormant when no object is presented to awaken feelings of the class to which it belongs, but always ready, and always availing, to give to every feeling of this class its own colour. In a word, whenever a person who is averse to God thinks of God, he will think of him with aversion.

Now it is this quiescent state of the heart to which we conceive the terms death, life, and regeneration, more specifically refer. They do not denote actions of any kind, but states out of which peculiar and appropriate actions arise. The alienation of a man's heart from God is called death; benevolence towards him is called life; and the production of such a feeling is the precise act of God which is called regeneration, or giving life to the dead. Its connexion with conversion is easily illustrated. While unconverted, his estrangement from God induces a man to disregard everything which tends to make him uneasy in a sinful life, and hence his fearful and criminal perseverance in it; but, when this is removed, and a right feeling towards God is imparted, then he begins to attend to the truths hitherto neglected, and in proportion as he attends to them they operate on him, and produce all the varied phenomena of conversion to God. May we be allowed to add our conviction, that an observation of the distinction upon which we have here dwelt would facilitate, if it would not even close, the long-perplexed inquiry respecting the identity and priority of regeneration and conversion?

Whether this idea of regeneration may satisfy our companions in this argument we know not, nor can we here enter into a discussion of it; it is, we hope, intelligible to our readers, and it is in our own view scriptural and satisfactory. It entirely removes the imaginary difficulty before us. For, if regeneration have respect exclusively to the state of mind in man, it can have no relation whatever to his power, which, as we have seen, is altogether distinct from his state of mind, and unaffected by it; so that, whether regenerate or unregenerate, he is the same in power, though he differs widely in moral habit.

We now take up the second objection to which we have referred. We are told that regeneration is a divine change; that it is the act of God exclusively; and that, since this is essential to salvation, something is necessary which a sinner cannot do for himself.

There is much truth in this allegation, but it is mixed with untruths, from which we must endeavour to separate it. Undoubtedly, regeneration, in the sense in which we have been speaking of it, is wholly and exclusively the act of God. As the subject of it, the sinner is wholly passive, and he has no share whatever in its effectuation. The very idea of his participating in it is not only mistaken, but preposterous. But I go on to observe, that it is not regeneration in this sense which is declared to be necessary to salvation. When the Scripture speaks of regeneration as necessary to salvation, it uses the term to express a practical change in human character, and not the act of divine power which is sometimes denoted by the same term. To establish this view, nothing more is necessary than to refer to the discourse of our Lord with Nicodemus, in which he so emphatically asserts the necessity of the new birth to salvation: "Except a man be born again," or rather, be begotten of God, "he cannot see the kingdom of heaven." This phrase—begotten of God—is the counterpart of that which is subsequently used, "born [begotten] of the Spirit." Now it might seem that the phrase, begotten of God, could hardly have been used in this case, without intending to intimate that the change denoted by it is of divine origin. A considerate examination of it, however, may lead to a different opinion. There is high critical authority for saying, that the phrase, begotten of God, denotes simply the formation of a moral likeness to God, or the renewing of our minds in the image of his holiness; and that it does not convey any idea concerning the power by which, or the method in which, this conformity to God may be wrought. I have no doubt that our Lord is speaking exclusively of this practical renovation in his address to Nicodemus, and that he has no reference whatever, as has been commonly supposed, to the divine origin of the change. In addition to the import of the term, as settled by critical authority, I am guided in this conclusion by two other considerations.

In the first place, I observe the nature of the ground on which Christ establishes, for the conviction of his disciple, the necessity he had asserted. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Or, to express the meaning in plainer words, "Those who are begotten of man are human, and those who are begotten

of the Spirit [or of God] are spiritual [or divine]. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again [begotten of God]." The phrases begotten of man and begotten of God I take to indicate a moral conformity to the image respectively of corrupt man and a Holy God; and the sentiment conveyed by our Lord appears to me to be this:—"Those who resemble corrupt men are fit only for the society of men; and those only are fit for fellowship with God who possess a similarity to God. Marvel not, therefore, that I said, ye must bear the likeness of God." If this explanation of the words should seem to any reader forced or unnatural, I have only to request him to use a vigorous effort to interpret the whole passage, and to trace out the entire line of thought in the mind of the divine instructor. It is but few persons who attempt to acquire a consistent view of this important passage throughout; yet it is only in such a view that its separate clauses can be justly understood. An interpretation of a single sentence, in the mouth of a person who admits that he does not understand the connexion, is not worth a moment's consideration. The verse, as I have explained it, presents to the startled mind of Nicodemus an obvious and convincing reason why a practical change was necessary; but it becomes apparent, at the same time, that it was only of a practical change that his instructor was speaking.

In the second place, I observe the character of the entire discourse, of which our Lord's declaration concerning the new birth forms only a part. After treating this subject, he immediately passes on, in the 14th verse, to a closely-associated topic: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The reader will recollect the evangelical declarations which then succeed, and the conclusion to which our Lord brings the whole—"This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil," ver. 19. Now it is plain that this discourse is *one*, and that the latter part of it is properly to be taken in connexion with the former. I beg, then, the candid reader to say, whether the Lord Jesus does not here present the Gospel as a means of removing that carnality of mind which unfits us for fellowship with God, and of producing that conformity to him which is indispensable to such

a privilege. The Son of Man is lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness; and the "eternal life" which is to be obtained by believing in him can be no other than "entering into the kingdom of heaven"—the same privilege under another name. If these things be so—and I see not how they can be denied—it follows that our Lord, after having shown Nicodemus that a change of character was necessary, shows him also how it may be produced, namely, by believing in the Son of God; he teaches him that it will be produced by faith, and that, if it be not effected, the fault lies with men themselves, who, although "light is come into the world, love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." Consequently, our Lord has not been speaking of the necessity of being begotten of God with reference to the act of God on the soul, but with reference only to that practical conformity to God, which, as the Scripture everywhere teaches, results from faith in his Son. And I come thus to the point I have to establish, namely, that regeneration, in the sense in which it is necessary to salvation, is not the act of God, in relation to which man can do nothing; but it is a change in man, which he can produce in himself, by exercising that faith which purifies the heart.

Some persons may now, perhaps, be ready to ask me, with unfeigned astonishment, whether I really mean to say that men can be regenerated without the influence of the Holy Spirit, and, above all, that men can regenerate themselves. To dispose first of the latter question, I have only to make the very reasonable request that we may have to do with things, and may not be misled by names. The word regeneration is used for two things, and, before we say anything about it, we must know in what sense it is employed. If the inquirer means by regeneration the act of God on the soul of man, I do not think that man can regenerate himself. If he means by regeneration the production of a practical conformity to God, I do think that man can regenerate himself; in other words, that faith in Christ will purify his heart.

The other question—whether men can be regenerated without the influence of the Holy Spirit—is to be answered on a different principle. In this I conceive the inquirer asking me, whether regeneration in the practical sense can be separated from regeneration in the technical sense; or, whether the renewing act of God on the soul is not necessary

to the actual renovation of a sinner's mind. Let me be permitted here to remind him, that we have now before us in another form the old question, whether the influence of the Spirit of God is not necessary to the conversion of a sinner; for regeneration in the practical sense differs not at all from conversion, and regeneration in the technical sense is only another name for the influence of the Spirit of God. As the questions are one, so is the answer. The influence of the Spirit *is* necessary; but, as it is necessary in conversion only because a sinner will not turn to God without it, so it is necessary in regeneration only because a sinner will not conform himself to God without it. If a sinner would but properly use his own faculties, divine influence might be dispensed with as well in the latter case as in the former.

I must now observe, that the question whether the influence of the Spirit is necessary to the practical regeneration of man, is widely different from this—whether such regeneration is necessary to his salvation. That conformity to God should be wrought in the heart of man *is* necessary to his salvation; but it is of no importance to his salvation how this conformity may be effected. To illustrate my meaning, I will suppose, for argument's sake, that there is a man whose heart has by himself been conformed to God; and I affirm, that he would not be refused the privilege connected with conformity to God because the change had not been produced by the Spirit of God. That which is necessary to salvation is the change, not its divine origin. Be it wrought how it may, its connected privilege is the same.

To return to the point from which we set out, and to express the conclusion to which I trust we have fairly come —since it is not the divine origin of regeneration which is necessary to salvation, but only the production of that change itself, and since this will certainly result from the exercise of faith in Christ, we conclude that there is required to the salvation of a sinner nothing which it is beyond his ability to perform.

7. I have been met by the observation, that the use of means depends for its success upon God's blessing, or, which in this case is conceived to be the same thing, upon the Spirit's influence; and from hence it is inferred that, however we may without the Spirit use the means, we cannot without him attain the end.

I reply to this, by objecting to the assumption that the divine energy which connects the means of moral action with their appropriate end is the influence of the Holy Spirit. It is doubtless true that, as the wisdom of God has adapted all means to their ends, so his power in all cases renders them effectual. It is equally by his energy that a seed germinates in the earth, that gunpowder is inflamed by a spark, and that perception awakens emotion. But this is a natural energy, and not the influence of the Holy Spirit; nor do I know why that should be called so, which renders reflection upon religious topics effectual to the conversion of a sinner. For what reason should the energy which connects a meditation on God's glory with a feeling of humility, or a meditation on Christ's sufferings with a feeling of love, any more be ascribed to the Holy Spirit, than that which connects the view of a volcano with emotions of sublimity? The operation in both cases accords with the nature and constitution of the mind, and requires nothing more for its accomplishment than the ordinary connexion between means and ends.

The influence of the Holy Spirit is, in all its aspects, a matter of grace through Christ Jesus, and a part of the covenant work of redemption; but the general connexion between means and ends, although truly divine, is not a part of the work of redemption, nor a fruit of the death of Christ, nor a matter of mercy at all. It is, on the contrary, a part of the original constitution of nature, a matter of primary wisdom and equity, needful to lay a foundation for rational conduct among mankind, as well as for the moral government of God.

I cannot hesitate, therefore, to express my conviction that (with a single exception, to be explained presently) the influence which connects moral and religious means with their ends is not that of the Holy Spirit; but that this connexion, like that of natural means with their respective ends, is established by the divine energy comprehended in the original constitution of things. Or let it only be supposed that it is not so—let it be supposed that, while, in every other department of human action, the energetic connexion between means and ends exists as a fixed and constant element in the structure of the universe, in the department of duty (by far the most important of all) there is no such connexion; but that here, if the use of means produces any result, it is owing

to a special influence, which could not have been bestowed at all if it had not been for the death of Christ, and which perhaps may not be bestowed although Christ has died: to say nothing of the hardship of duty required on such an hypothesis, it is obvious that, in this case, sin must have produced a physical derangement in the creation, and that the object of the Spirit's work in redemption must be to remedy this physical defect. Whether any of my readers may feel complacency in such a conclusion, I know not; but it has generally been held, I believe, that the effects which it is the office of the blessed Spirit to produce are of a moral, and not of a physical kind.

Should I be asked, for what, then, it is that we need the influence of the Holy Spirit, if it is not to render the means we use with ourselves effectual to our good, I answer, it is to lead us to the use of those means. It is this, properly understood, to which the carnal heart is prevailingly and stubbornly averse; and it is to conquer this aversion that a gracious divine interposition is required. Such I believe to be the doctrine of Holy Writ; and I have no doubt but it agrees with universal experience. For my own part, I am fully convinced that sacred meditation operates to the production of holy feeling in me, by virtue of the constitution of my mind, and of the divine energy which essentially sustains it. That for which I am indebted—and infinitely indebted—to the Holy Spirit is, that he leads this wandering and wayward heart to contemplation, and draws me towards that adorable Saviour, from whom, were it not for these gracious impulses, I should for ever stray. There are no influences so undeserved, so richly and so touchingly merciful, as these.

Of course, I am perfectly aware that the work of the Holy Spirit is not confined to those impulses, by which he leads us to the use of the means appropriate to our spiritual good. Far be it from me, either to deny or to depreciate those sacred and blessed influences, by which the heart of the Christian is so often refreshed, his graces enlivened, and his holy consolations enlarged, with a merciful, wise, and adorable sovereignty. I trust I am not intruding on this hallowed field, when I affirm that the divine energy which maintains the universal connexion between means and ends is natural rather than gracious, and rather pertains to the original constitution of things than to the work of redeeming love.

The only exception to the principle now laid down, is to be found in the use of means for the conversion, not of ourselves, but of others. In this case I readily admit that, if the effect is produced, it is through the gracious influence of the Spirit. But the nature of the case immediately shows the ground of the exception. Here are means used towards a voluntary agent; towards a being, therefore, who has a capacity of resisting them, and the entire energy they derive from the original constitution of things. We use means to induce him to fix his attention on given objects, with a given purpose. And there is an energy in these means for the production of the end, although it is not strong enough to prevent an effectual resistance on his part; indeed, if it were, his character as a voluntary agent would be totally destroyed. He actually does resist. He will not fix his attention on a subject to which he is so desperately averse. And therefore is the influence of the Holy Spirit necessary, not to supply any deficiency of natural adaptation, but to superadd an energy, which could not have been imparted to the means themselves without destroying the character of the agent to whom they were applied.

If the remarks I have made are just, they bear me out in saying that, although a sinner cannot, of course, turn to God without that divine energy which, in all cases, connects the means with the end, he can do so without the influence of the Holy Spirit.

8. It has been said that ungodly men in general entertain the opinion of their ability to do their duty, and that the fondness with which they cling to this notion demonstrates its fallacy.

This is a strange argument in its principle. Every idea which wicked men generally entertain, it appears, must for that reason be false. Yet a sense of obligation and duty, of right and wrong, and other dictates of conscience, are found more or less distinctly in wicked men, at least as generally as the notion of their ability, all which by this process would be demonstrated to be erroneous. The Scriptures, on the contrary, clearly intimate that the consciences of fallen men retain some remnants of truth, which constitute the law written in their hearts, and make them "a law unto themselves," Rom. ii. 14, 15; and the conviction of their ability for duty may, for aught that yet appears to the contrary, be one of these lingering principles of rectitude.

The argument is equally delusive in its details. If ungodly men at large do think that they have ability to do well, it is by no means an opinion to which they cling with any fondness. On the contrary, they are for the most part extremely glad to rid themselves of it, and they eagerly avail themselves of every expedient by which its force may be diminished. Hence the prevalence of the doctrine of fatalism among heathen nations, and the philosophical or more thinking portion of enlightened countries; hence the perpetual tendency, even in the commonest minds, to make excuses for misconduct involving more or less distinctly the notion that they could not help it; and hence the readiness with which the same sentiment has been imbibed from the preachers of the Divine Word, until, though still contended against by an honest conscience, it has spread over the whole surface of a professedly Christian land. We have little doubt that, in defiance of inward remonstrances, multitudes believe that they can do nothing, that they are very glad to believe it, that many more would believe it if they could, and that even those who do not believe it think there must be some truth in it, since it is so often and so prominently made a part of pulpit instruction; but it is far worse than all this, that the expression of such a sentiment by the ministers of the Gospel should fall in with the depraved wishes of their hearers, and either, on the one hand, tend to silence their inward monitor, and to release them from the last restraint placed on their vicious courses by their Creator, or, on the other, violate the dictates of conscience, shock the common sense of mankind, and give occasion to those whom our ministry should convince and persuade to turn the whole into ridicule and contempt. This we know to be the effect of such preaching upon ungodly men; and we have felt a more pungent affliction than we have power to express, that the wiles of Satan should thus have converted those by whose instrumentality his kingdom should have been shaken to its foundations, into agents for propagating the delusions in which its main stability consists.

To us it is a convincing proof that the sentiment which affirms man's inability is false, that, after all which has been said in favour of it, it cannot be fixed on the conscience of mankind. On account of the attempt to do so some men discard religion altogether, while others, though glad enough

to avail themselves of it as a cloak for sin, and as a means of parrying every appeal to their consciences, do not believe it in their hearts. Why will any persons continue to labour in so hopeless a cause, and, above all, to identify religion with a contradiction of the common sense of mankind?

The mischievous idea which ungodly men do entertain of themselves, and of which it is so hard to divest them, is, not that they are able to do well, but that they are disposed to do well. They maintain that they have good hearts, that they wish to be good people, that they do the best they can, and would do better if they could. They are willing enough to confess weakness, but not wickedness. This is their ruinous self-flattery, exalting themselves in their own eyes, contradicting the testimony of God, leading to a rejection of the Gospel, and inducing fatal repose. It is the contrary of this which they find it so hard to learn, and which, indeed, none ever do learn but as taught of God. Will my reader, if he knows anything of experimental piety, decide this question by an appeal to his own consciousness? What was the discovery which divine instruction led you to make? Was it not that your heart was determined against God and holiness, and so desperately determined as to yield to none but an Almighty power? You had imagined yourself disposed to good, you found that you loved evil; and the discovery was associated with a sense of vileness and emotions of self-loathing which no perception of mere weakness, or want of power, could ever have produced.

9. It has been said that, in maintaining the ability of man, we maintain also free-will.

Of all the imputations brought against us, this is perhaps the strangest, since it shows, not only an entire ignorance of the bearings of the controversy, but an almost incredible inattention to the language employed in it. We maintain that *man* is free; but we deny *the will* to be either free or bound, since, from its nature, it is not capable of being so. By free-will, however, we suppose our brethren to mean a disposition to goodness, an actual choice of holiness, or a willingness to choose it; and this our whole treatise goes, in the strongest possible manner, to deny to man. While we affirm that he can turn to God, we are continually affirming also that he will not. What other reason, indeed, can we assign why he does not? Those who assert that they have

not power are the parties who have the opportunity, if they please, of cherishing the fancy of a good disposition in sinners, inasmuch as, if it existed, it could, according to them, be of no avail to conversion. Upon our principles, the whole stress of men's impenitence is laid upon their determination not to repent, which is exhibited in a much stronger light by us than by our brethren; and yet they are amusing themselves, and deluding their followers, by hurling at us the charge of maintaining free-will!

10. The novelty of the ground now taken, in asserting that man is able to do his duty, has been alleged as another ground of objection. "Even Mr. Fuller," it is said, "and all divines of that class, have hitherto admitted a moral inability. Why need you go further?"

There is one sense in which the writer is far from pleading guilty to the charge thus adduced. He can revere no doctrine which is not as old as the Bible; and, when it is shown that any he holds are less ancient than this, he will immediately relinquish them. He considers the tenets he opposes as the novelties. An antiquity of a few hundred years is totally insufficient to exempt them from this character.*

In reference to the controversy, however, which has been carried on in England within the last hundred years, in which the late Rev. Andrew Fuller bore a conspicuous part, and in reference to the ground which he has taken in it, the author must, perhaps, to some extent, though not to a very considerable one, admit the allegation of novelty.

Mr. Fuller maintained that the only obstruction to a sinner's repentance was the aversion of his heart to God, that is to say, an evil disposition—in this grand point entirely concurring with the present writer. This he still called inability; but, to separate from the term the inapplicable and mischievous ideas involved in its ordinary use, he adopted the method, previously used by some American and other divines, of calling this supposed inability of sinners to repent a moral inability. By this phrase he explains himself to mean such an inability as consists in a want of disposition; thus distinguishing it from a natural inability, the existence of which he denied.† This very statement

* See Ryland's Memoirs of Fuller, chap. i., first edit. † *Ibid*, p. 353.

leads directly to the conclusion to which we have come; for, if moral inability be such as consists in a want of disposition, natural inability must be such as consists in a want of means, there being no other ideas to which the term ability has ever been referred but to these two, means and disposition. Mr. Fuller, therefore, really held, and in his earlier writings broadly stated, what we have maintained, namely, that man possesses full power to repent.*

The expediency of using the term moral inability, as Mr. Fuller did, to denote a wrong disposition, is highly questionable. It satisfied the disputants of past days; but at that time it rather concealed than exhibited the truth contended for, and ever since it has rather occasioned perplexity than facilitated inquiry. The existence of inability on the part of sinners was the grand position which the opposing divines had maintained; and the adoption of the phrase in question permitted them to continue to maintain it. Its being qualified by the term *moral* was of little consequence; still, they said, you allow inability to exist, and whether it is natural or moral makes no difference—it is inability. Hence, although the argument of Mr. Fuller was triumphant, much less was gained by it than it contemplated and deserved; and to this day both clergy and laity are suffering, to a great extent, the very same mischiefs from the notion of man's moral inability, which that of his natural inability had previously inflicted. The question really at issue has been evaded by the help of an ill chosen term; and the battle remains yet to be fought on the clear and open ground—Is there, on the part of a sinner, any inability at all?

It may be observed, also, that although the idea which Mr. Fuller attached to the phrase moral inability was clear and definite enough, it is liable to receive, and has often received, a very different interpretation. "Moral ability!" says a reader of this language; "and what is moral ability, or inability? Moral ability surely must be such an ability as is required to the performance of moral actions, or, at least, to the performance of actions morally good; and, if I have not such ability, no actions morally good can be required of me." This is not at all an unnatural or unreasonable inter-

* In his Gospel Worthy of all Acceptation. See also a note in the Memoir by his Son, in the edition of his works of 1831, vol. i., p. 62.

pretation of the terms, but the idea that moral ability in this sense is wanting is altogether erroneous; since the ability to perform actions morally good, consists merely in the intelligent faculties and the power of moral judgments possessed by every man of a sane mind.

We are very willing to admit that the term inability may be applied in an analogical sense to denote the want of disposition, as cannot and impossible frequently are; but we must maintain that it is only in an analogical sense it can be so applied. This is the pivot of the whole dispute. If it be as we affirm, then the use of the terms in question is inappropriate; they are not literally and strictly true, that is, they are not true in their ordinary and apparent sense. We do not deny that words may be, and often are, used out of their strict and literal meaning; but words should not be so used in argument, and most especially not the words which express the very ground of debate, and the precise point of contention. Metaphors and analogies are excellent for the illustration of an admitted sentiment, but wretchedly confounding in the examination of a contested one. If we wish any clearness or conclusiveness of argument, nothing is more important than to reduce every principal word we employ to its strict and literal meaning, and never to use it in any other; but above all things is this desirable, we may say it is indispensable, with the primary terms. On this ground we conceive the phrase moral inability should be altogether dropped, inasmuch as it proceeds upon an analogy which is extremely likely to mislead; let us rather know in plain terms what is meant by it, and make that the subject of our discussions. There is no difficulty in this. The terms moral inability mean a want of disposition, a phrase which ought in all cases to become its substitute. What must we think if the clearness and simplicity which it throws into the argument should be felt as an objection to this proposal? If the terms moral inability are to be retained on any reasonable ground, it must be because they are strictly and properly applicable to a want of disposition; an opinion which we shall be extremely happy to see any one attempt to establish.

If the term inability be in strictness inappropriate to the subject, there is the more reason it should be abandoned, because there is a perpetual and irresistible tendency in all upon whom the argument bears to understand it literally.

Thus, when we urge a sinner to repent, he replies—But you tell me I am unable; in this case plainly taking the word unable in its strict, and not in its analogical sense. If we have used it in that sense, he fairly repels our exhortation, and may defy us to meet his argument: if we have not used it in this sense, it behoves us then to tell him so, and to say—I do not mean that you are unable; you are strictly and truly able to repent. And if this is the point to which a single observation of an ungodly man may drive us, why should we set out with the tenacious and prominent use of a phrase which we must so soon abandon, and apparently contradict?

The names of those who originated and conducted the great and important discussion respecting the duty of man called the modern question, deserve to be had in everlasting remembrance, nor can the author ever forget, or fail most gratefully to acknowledge, his deep obligations to them. But he feels no apology to be due for differing from them. One thing they taught him was to think for himself; and he is sure they would be happy in having led others to a view in any degree clearer and more accurate than their own. He has no name to add weight to his opinions; but he claims not to be judged at a human bar. Why would his readers inquire whether he agrees with Mr. Fuller? Let them ask only whether he is consistent with the Oracles of God.

If it were of any importance, however (to the writer it is certainly matter of gratification), it might be stated, that in this sentiment he is far from being alone. He has reason to believe that not a few of the most able and most useful ministers of the Gospel in various denominations mainly, if not entirely, agree with him; and that the same sentiments are entertained by many judicious Christians in private life, who are longing to see their teachers escape from their bonds. He has a cheering confidence that the bonds are loosening, and is sorry that any worthy men should identify themselves with a falling system.

CHAPTER XVII.

Considerations for those who may not be convinced.

However willing we may be to hope that the preceding pages have carried conviction to some of our readers, it were too much to suppose this to have been the case with them all. We shall probably part with some of them without having arrived at this result. Concerning them we have no wish but that they would give repeated and serious examination to whatever may seem to them adapted to the attainment of truth. If, after all, they retain the opinion which we have combated, we leave two points for their consideration.

1. Those who find it hard to admit that a sinner can turn to God, should consider whether it is not quite as hard to maintain firmly that he cannot. The position we have taken is this, that a sinner can come to Christ, whether he will or not; that is, suppose either case, that he will or that he will not, still he can come. The opposite sentiment fully and fairly expressed is, that, whether he will or not, a sinner cannot come. If our brethren in the argument do not mean this, it is quite time they should be explicit with themselves, and penetrate the fallacy which must be lurking somewhere amidst the terms they employ. If they do fairly mean this, really it is rather a hard case. In one alternative, indeed, that is on the supposition that the sinner will not come, the alleged impossibility might be of little consequence, though still it would be calling things by wrong names, and withholding from God the glory which is his due. But let us take the other alternative, and say, that if a sinner would come to Christ he cannot: what are we to think of this? It will doubtless be met by an immediate cry, that a sinner will not come, that such a supposition never will be realized, and that therefore it is unfair. We know that such a supposition never will be realized; but we cannot allow it on that account to be unfair. The proper way to try a sentiment is to make various suppositions, as many, indeed, as it will possibly admit, and see how it appears in those varied lights; for every portion of truth is like a fragment of com-

plex mechanism, it will fit nowhere but in its place, and it will fit exactly there. We are willing that our position should be tried on either supposition, either that a sinner will come or that he will not; and, if our brethren are not willing that theirs should be put to a similar test, it must be because they either have, or ought to have, some want of confidence in their argument. If the argument itself will not bear this examination, it is undoubtedly fallacious; and every man who has any regard to truth or honesty should immediately renounce it. Let us proceed to the trial.

One of the supposable cases involved in the statement that, whether he will or not, a sinner cannot come to Christ, is, that a sinner may be willing to come to Christ, and yet not able. Let us then imagine such a person before us. By the supposition, he is willing to come to Christ; his resistance is subdued, the enmity of his heart has given way, he has renounced sin and the world, he is in a state of right feeling towards God, and quite ready to return and submit himself to the appointed Saviour; but—he cannot! What is the meaning of this? He cannot? What is to prevent him? Let it be explicitly stated what cause can interpose its baneful influence to obstruct this blessed return. We have heard of many things which make a sinner unwilling, and so prevent his conversion; but here is a case supposed in which all these hindrances are removed, and yet there is the strange mystery of some other hindrance, to prevent a willing sinner from bowing to the Saviour! In the name of all that is reasonable and honest, we demand that this hidden, mysterious, and as yet nameless power, should be dragged forth to light, that we may have an opportunity of ascertaining its nature, if not of counteracting its influence.

Nor is this all. In what a pitiable condition is the sinner thus placed! He has been told to come to Christ, under assurances of mercy; and he is willing to come, but he cannot. The state of his mind is altered as prescribed, but not his condition of wrath. Not having come to Christ, he is still under condemnation, although he is no longer in love with sin, nor at enmity with his Maker. He is bound down for destruction, therefore, by something else than his sins; he would escape, but he cannot. There is something in this representation truly horrible, something adapted to dissociate from the perishing sinner every feeling of blame, and to

render him an object of unmixed compassion. Hitherto we have been accustomed to regard him as liable to perish only because he was wedded to his sins, and as rushing on destruction in a way of wilfulness and criminality, which rendered his punishment as just as it is awful. But everything must now be viewed in a different light. Unfortunate wretch! If he could, he would escape. He has no love of sin, no enmity to his Maker, no aversion to the Saviour; but some dreadful power will not suffer him to accomplish his wishes, and binds him over to perdition. Perish, then, miserable victim! The whole creation will sympathize with thee in thy fall.

Once more. What must we think of the author of such a state of things as this? Is there in such a condition anything merciful, anything equitable? Is it not one from which all our feelings revolt with horror? And yet, if the sentiment under consideration be true, the possible existence of such a condition must be ascribed to the most glorious and blessed being in the universe; for *he* has determined the details of our natural and moral situation. How can it for a moment be supposed, that a being infinitely just and merciful should have adopted a constitution capable, under any circumstances, of producing such an alternative as this, and requiring only a due consideration of what he himself has most earnestly pressed upon our attention in order actually to produce it; while, at the same time, he professes to have made a most gracious provision for the salvation of the guilty upon their return to him, and calls and invites sinners, who, when they hear and would accept the call, find unexpectedly that they cannot do so, and sink helplessly into hell, with all the apparatus of mercy turned into a bitter mockery of their ruin?

Every one must be convinced that the ever blessed and glorious God is infinitely remote from the possibility of such an imputation; nor do we wish to insinuate, for a moment, that those who are opposed to us on the question at issue make any approach towards such an imputation; they probably regard it with as deep horror as ourselves: but it is not the less true, that the consequences we have exhibited are involved in the sentiment they maintain; and, if they are to be avoided, it can only be by abandoning their ground. Let them recollect their assertion—that, whether he will or not,

a sinner cannot come to Christ; and then let them trace our deduction from it most rigorously, determined to detect its fallacy if it be fallacious, but equally determined to relinquish their tenet if it be correct.

The reader can scarcely have failed to perceive, in some points of this argument, an appearance of contradiction and perplexity. We have spoken, for example, of a sinner's being no longer an enemy to God, and yet not being reconciled to him; when, in fact, not to be an enemy is the same thing as being reconciled. We have been compelled to speak in this way, because the statement against which we argue overlooks the fact, that the terms coming to Christ, being reconciled to God, &c., are simply expressive of a state of mind; a state of mind being that, also, with which salvation is connected. To say, therefore, that a man cannot be reconciled to God, even if he ceases to be an enemy to him, is to say that he cannot be in a certain state of mind, even if he is in that very state of mind; a direct and obvious contradiction, when drawn out from the familiar, yet ill-understood phraseology, under which the unobservant suffer it to be concealed.

2. The assertors of the inability of man should inform us what man can do. They have been candid enough on certain occasions to allow that he can do *something*, though his ability does not, in their view, correspond with his duty; but it is important that they should describe particularly what man can, and what he cannot do, and draw an intelligible line of demarcation between these two great provinces of action and duty. The distinction is unquestionably of considerable moment, and less attention has been bestowed upon it by our brethren than it deserves. So far as their ideas upon it can be collected, they appear to hold, that, although man can neither be nor do anything spiritually good (that is, good in disposition), yet he can use the means for this end; and one writer, who has been unusually explicit upon this subject, has given us the following statement:—

"Man is able, and ought to examine the evidences of Christianity, and the contents of the inspired volume. He is able, and ought to attend on the ordinances of religion, to retire for serious reflection on what announcements have been made by the preacher, and to examine his own heart

and life by the infallible test of Scripture. He is able, and ought to go upon his knees before God, for confession of sin, and supplication for mercy and power. He is able, and ought to avoid the company of the ungodly, and to seek intercourse with those who fear God. He is able, and ought to observe the dealings of God with him in providence, and inquire what influence they have upon him. He is able, and ought to consider the solemnities of death, judgment, and the eternal state, and the descriptions given of those who are prepared. Will any one deny these things to be within the compass of his own ability, or affirm them to be excluded from the most obvious duties? In this course every one may cherish hope."*

It is obvious, upon the very face of this statement, that these defenders of man's inability allow and maintain his ability also, in the same sense and to the same extent as ourselves. We have asserted nothing more than that man can use the means of being and doing all that he ought to be, of which every reader may satisfy himself by referring to our definition of power, page 49; and this, it seems, a part of our brethren in this controversy freely allow. There is, therefore, no real difference between us; and the discussion reduces itself to these two points: 1, Whether the means we possess of being what we ought to be are sufficient; and, 2, whether the possession of such means is properly called power. Both these points have already engaged our attention, see pages 38, 49. We shall here only make two remarks. The first is, that, if we suppose God to have required certain effects to be produced by means which are not sufficient, we attach to him the imputation of "gathering where he has not strawed," which he repels with so much indignation when insinuated by the "wicked and slothful servant," Matt. xxv. 24, 26. The second is, that, in all ordinary cases, the possession of sufficient means is considered as the possession of power. He that has sufficient means of doing anything *can do it.* If this be an error, let it be corrected in common life; if it be a truth, why should it be rejected in religion?

If we accurately interpret the views of our brethren upon this point, it is clear that, with all their array of hostility

* Douglas's Letter to the Author, page 15.

against us, they really hold the very tenet for which they make us fight, and for defending which they visit us sometimes with such severe animadversions—rather an unkind return, by the bye, for our trouble in vindicating their sentiments. Whatever injurious consequences may result from the sentiment itself, the mischief lies as much at their door as at ours; nor can it be much to their advantage, that what they affirm in one form of words they strenuously deny in another. If, on the contrary, we do not understand them correctly—if they do not intend that man can use the means of being what he ought to be, it will materially aid the discussion if they will have the kindness to explain themselves more fully, and specify distinctly what man can do; a thing which is manifestly important, and ought not to be difficult.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Of the necessity of the Holy Spirit as implying contrariety of disposition.

We have already seen that the necessity of the Spirit's influence to the conversion of a sinner implies something respecting the condition of a sinner himself; namely, that, without such aid, he would never turn to God. It might be supposed, by many it has been supposed, to imply that he is destitute of power to do so; a sentiment which we have been examining, and endeavouring to disprove. What then does it imply? To this we have already answered in substance, that it implies a contrariety of disposition; a statement which we now proceed more fully to develop and establish.

It is the more needful to do this, because, as there is a strong tendency on the one hand to maintain that man has not power to do well, so there is a tendency on the other to imagine that he has a disposition to do so. Men will much rather confess weakness than wickedness, and they cling fondly to the delusive imagination that they would be right if they could. We sorrowfully believe, on the contrary, that the disposition of man is directly and powerfully evil.

It is not our business here to enter into the proofs of this at large; but to show how it arises out of the doctrine we have established, namely, that of the necessity of the Spirit's influence in order to conversion.

If this doctrine be true, it is but the same thing in other words to say, that, without the Spirit, repentance will never take place. Now, although there may be an endless diversity of circumstances, there can be only two causes operating to prevent any action; either we have not power, or we have not disposition to perform it. All hindrances may be reduced to these, nor can any other be imagined. If the Holy Spirit, therefore, be necessary to repentance, it must be either because we have not power, or because we have not disposition, to repent without him; but it has been shown that we have power—wherefore it must be because we have not disposition.

We now take it as proved that we have power to repent. If, in addition to this, we have also a disposition to repent, it is manifest that we shall do so of our own accord, every action being certainly performed when we have both the power and the disposition to perform it. In such a case the Holy Spirit would not be necessary, seeing that we should repent independently of him; but we have seen that his blessed influence is necessary; whence it follows, that, however we may flatter ourselves, we have not a disposition to repent. To conceive that we are of ourselves disposed to repent, and to do everything right if we could, or as far as we can, is directly to deny the need of the Spirit's energy.

No doubt, there are often arising in the minds of men certain thoughts, or perhaps feelings, on the subject of religion, which may be mistaken for a disposition to repent. These are nothing more than admonitions of conscience, or emotions of fear or desire. At their greatest amount they have no prevailing influence, they lead to no determination, to no action. In this way, and to this extent, the heart may be affected by many things at the same time, and inclinations excited towards different and even opposite objects. It is manifest that such inclinations are of no practical value, and that they indicate nothing respecting a man's character, or what may be expected from it. He may have some inclination to religion, but more to worldliness; and so may be always worldly, in defiance of his inclinations to religion.

That which determines character is the prevailing inclination, or what we have strictly defined to be disposition, as distinct from inclination; and it is this we mean, when we say that man has no disposition to repent. He may, and often does feel convicted, alarmed, desirous, but his prevailing feelings are always earthly; and what we conclude from the necessity of the Holy Spirit is, that they always will be so. If the better feelings should ever arise to a prevailing degree, in that case repentance would take place without the Spirit, which, as we have seen, will never be the case.

The necessity of the Spirit's influence, therefore, establishes the unwelcome and melancholy fact, that our natural disposition is opposed to God, to our duty, and to our welfare. We love sin, we hate our Maker. This is afflictive; but what follows is far more so. Our disposition, it appears, is thus hostile to God and to our duty, in the midst of circumstances most powerfully adapted to render it otherwise. God has exhibited himself to us in colours of the brightest glory, and of the most touching mercy. Everything just and weighty in obligation, everything solemn and impressive in prospect, everything winning and constraining in kindness, everything powerful and generous in motive, everything by which every chord in the heart might be touched, has been set before us; and yet our disposition is hostile to God, and reckless of our own ruin. Nor is this all. It is desperately so. So wedded to sin, so bent upon self-indulgence, that not all which God has said will ever induce even serious consideration; no patience, no repetition of his calls, no earnestness of importunity, no approach of terrors, will ever change this melancholy mind. His Spirit alone must achieve the transformation. The intensity of evil disposition which this evinces, therefore, is most extreme and astonishing. It can find no parallel. In other cases considerations of duty, of gratitude, of interest, find their way to the heart by which for a time they may have been resisted; but in this, although infinitely the most important, an ill disposition reigns so triumphantly as to repel every attempt. He that fears his fellow-creature defies his Maker; he that is grateful to an earthly benefactor insults an heavenly one; he that shrinks from bodily harm plunges his soul into hell; he that attaches boundless importance to time trifles with eternity. And all this will he continue to do, amidst the revealed glories of

heaven and terrors of hell; amidst the warnings of wrath and the wooings of mercy; amidst the tears of the Saviour and the lamentations of angels; amidst the reproofs of his conscience and the anticipations of destruction. Such, alas! is man. What words can adequately describe a disposition so deplorable?

The second part of our plan, which was to examine the aspect of the Spirit's work on the previous condition of man, has now been executed, and the result of it may be summed up in a few words. The necessity of the Spirit's influence in order to conversion does not argue a want of power in man, but it does argue a contrariety of disposition. It remains for us to observe, in the last place, the aspect of the Spirit's work in relation to the ways of God.

PART III.

THE ASPECT OF THE SPIRIT'S WORK IN RELATION TO THE WAYS OF GOD.

THE ministration of the Spirit, or the employment of his almighty energy to accomplish the transformation of a sinner's heart, is a part of God's general administration towards the children of men. As such it has by no means an isolated character, but stands connected with all other parts of the same administration; and in this connexion it has features of great excellency and importance. Some of these we have been led indirectly to notice in the preceding portion of this volume; but they call for a more distinct exhibition.

CHAPTER I.

Of the ministration of the Spirit in its relation to a sinner individually.

FROM the doctrine we have laid down it results, that the blessed Spirit, when he enters into the heart of a sinner to turn him to God, performs this work of love unsought. The aspects of this administration of the Spirit are now to be considered.

1. It is impossible not to observe immediately its pre-eminent grace. How passing strange is the fact, that the blessed Spirit, infinitely holy as he is, and burning for the divine glory, will enter such a breast, and wrest out of a sinner's hand the very weapon with which he is about, both to defy his Maker, and to destroy his own soul! This is going immeasurably beyond all that justice requires, and is the utmost length of kindness to a guilty worm. God not only provides the blessedness, but gives the disposition to embrace it; herein giving what also he justly demands, and providing for the payment of that to himself which is righteously due to him from his creatures.

To this it must be added, that the gift of the Holy Spirit secures the attainment of the great and unspeakable blessings exhibited in the Gospel. A sinner is then no longer left to trifle with salvation; but the hitherto prevailing enmity of his heart is overcome, and he is made willing in the day of divine power. He resists no more; but, led by the Spirit, humbly bows to the sceptre of redeeming mercy, and every thought is brought into captivity to the obedience of faith. He thus becomes an actual partaker of salvation itself, and enters into the enjoyment of all its privileges; being justified by faith, he has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also he has access unto the grace wherein he stands, and rejoices in hope of the glory of God, Rom. v. 1, 2. How pre-eminently gracious must the work be, which leads to such immeasurable and eternal blessedness! Without the influence of the Spirit a sinner would be a wretch undone, even in the midst of mercies; with it, he becomes unutterably and for ever blest.

2. This ministration of the Spirit is not universal, but peculiar. This is known by the fruits; since, wherever the Spirit is given, repentance and conversion are actually produced. From the very fact, therefore (even if there were no other evidence), that only some persons are converted, the inference must necessarily be drawn, that only to some is the Spirit given. With this inevitable conclusion the declarations of Holy Writ fully agree, but it is important to show that the burden of its proof does not lie upon them. Those who dislike them or their import, may conceive them to be blotted out of the book of God if they please; we call upon them to read in another book the same lesson. The fact is before their eyes, and cannot be obliterated; why should they find fault with the mere words which record it?

What can be the cause of this peculiarity? Whence can it have originated? By what influence can the course of this celestial stream have been determined? Certainly by God himself, since no other being has power or opportunity to interpose in this matter. Of the Spirit he giveth to every man severally as it pleaseth him. But are there any known causes which may have guided his determination? Does he give the Spirit to any one because he deserves it, because he has made a proper improvement of other favours, because he has been considerate and prayerful, because he has been upright

and moral? And does he withhold it from another because he has been the contrary? Or is it merely according to his will and arbitrary pleasure?

To these inquiries it is obvious to answer, that God has certainly not acted without a reason, and a good one. No wise being does so, least of all one who is infinitely wise. The idea that he has distributed his Spirit, or any other blessing, according to his *mere* will and pleasure, however sanctioned by one class of divines or attacked by another, is not only unsupported by Scripture, but directly opposed to it. Hear, for example, the words of our Lord. "At that time Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it *seemed good* in thy sight," Matt. xi. 25, 26. When we say that a person does anything *merely* because he will, we mean that he had no regard to the character or tendency of the action itself; but not such is the aspect of discriminating grace. What God has done he has well weighed, and has done it because "it *seemed good* in his sight."

The general nature of the reasons under which God has acted is also to be ascertained with sufficient clearness. There is but one grand reason for which he does all things, and that is the glory of his own name. With a view to this end, doubtless, he has decided in every instance the question of the communication of the Spirit. That we should be able in all cases to trace this tendency of his ways it would be unreasonable to expect, with our limited capacity and our present ignorance; but this affords us no just cause to doubt its reality. Upon a large scale some views of it are already apparent, and are opened to us by inspired authority. "Ye see your calling, brethren; how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence." 1 Cor. i. 26–29.

One thing is certain, that whatever the reasons may be which have actuated the Almighty in any particular case,

they have never been derived from the desert or excellency of man himself. To none has the Spirit been given because of his wisdom, or rank, or power, or humility, or virtue, or any other excellency, natural or moral; and this principle has been adopted out of regard to the grand design that God may be glorified in all. Were it otherwise, some might have cause for glorying in his presence; which may not be, seeing it is written, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord," 1 Cor. i. 31.

The ministration of the Spirit, then, is discriminating and sovereign; a point in which God does not render to all alike, but severally to each as it seemeth good in his sight. This simple and inevitable truth is to many persons a grand stumbling-block, and cause of complaint. God, then, it is said, makes a difference among men, and does not give us all the same facilities for salvation. But again we say, that the attack ought to be made, not against the doctrine, but against the fact. Suppose the doctrine buried in oblivion, the fact will be irresistible, so long as you see some around you converted and others in their sins. Whatever ground there may be of complaint, therefore, there can be no alteration.

But, after all, is there any foundation for complaint? The question to be decided is not what has been God's conduct to others, but what has been his conduct to me. Has he done me any wrong? Has he withheld from me any means or advantage, requisite to my having a fair and full opportunity of fleeing from the wrath to come? If he has, it is to be found in the examination of my own circumstances, and not in comparing them with those of others. Now, in the closest inspection of God's dealings with himself, no sinner can find cause of complaint; on the contrary, he is treated, not only with justice, but with kindness; and, if he fails of salvation, it will be only through a wilful and perverse neglect of his opportunities. It is true, his next neighbour is dealt with yet more kindly; but that makes, and can make, no difference to him; his case is what it is in itself, and so ever will remain.

The general view which we take of the dispensation of the Spirit is, that it is characterized by pre-eminent kindness, and sovereign discrimination. It may be pleasant, ere we close, to observe in what relation the ministration of the Spirit stands to the ways of God in their most general

aspects, considered as consisting in, either the exercise of personal kindness, the administration of moral government, or the conducting of an effectual agency.

CHAPTER II.

Of the ministration of the Spirit as connected with the work of redemption generally.

It is, of course, with no other part of the divine ways than the work of redemption that the ministration of the Spirit is connected. The whole office of this blessed agent, so far as man is concerned, is to remedy an existing mischief in his character; and the assumption of such an office clearly implies, both that he is fallen from his original excellency, and that by divine mercy a restorative process is undertaken. The influence of the Spirit could not have been called for under any other circumstances; and the administration of it is a part of the method by which the redemption of men from sin and misery is accomplished.

It is not, however, the first part of this method. By transgression men are fallen into a state of guilt and condemnation, which not only forfeits all title to the favour of God, but actually shuts them out from the possibility of its communication without some preparatory measure. The law requires to be fulfilled, and the righteousness of the lawgiver to be maintained, at the same time that mercy is extended to the criminal, and an effectual provision for this must be made, before any exercise of mercy is actually entered upon. Hence we say, therefore, that the gift of his dear Son to die for sinners is prior, in the dispensations of God, to the gift of his Holy Spirit. The communication of the Spirit presupposes the death of Christ, without which no good thing could ever have been conferred on the guilty; it is, indeed, the fruit of his dying pains, and is poured out to the honour of his love, and for the glory of his name.

But this is not all. It might be asked, Why, although Christ had died, should the Holy Spirit be imparted? Was

not the way of salvation fully opened by the blood-shedding of the Son of God? Undoubtedly it was; and, if men would have availed themselves of it without an extrinsic influence, there would have been no occasion for the operation of the eternal Spirit. The introduction of this glorious agent proceeds upon the supposition that, although the way of salvation is open, the determination of man's heart is so fixed in sin that he will not avail himself of it, even when favoured with the amplest opportunities, and addressed by the most powerful motives. Such, on God's authority, the fact is declared to be; and it is to meet this feature of the case that the ministration of the Spirit is superadded to the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is to induce sinners to receive him, to cause his enemies to submit themselves, and to bring them, in this method, to the actual possession of redemption.

1. Now it is manifest, that one grand and important feature of this administration relates to the final issue of the work of redemption itself. Without it, although a vast provision had been made for the salvation of sinners, not a single sinner would be saved; and, in this respect, a character of fruitlessness and disappointment would have been given to this great undertaking, which could be neither gratifying to the benevolence of the Most High, nor conducive to his glory. To prevent so undesirable a result, and to secure a large and sufficient measure of success in the actual salvation of men, the divine Spirit is sent forth, with his almighty energy to work effectually in their hearts, to vanquish their enmity, and to bring them to the Saviour, that he may see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.

2. Another principal aspect of the ministration of the Spirit has relation to the happiness of man. When God determined to send his Spirit unsought into the breasts of particular persons whom he foreknew, while it was for his own glory, it was also for their good. It was because he loved them with an everlasting love, that he thus purposed to draw them with loving-kindness. It is a pre-eminent illustration of his personal kindness towards the objects he had in view.

3. It is to be observed, however, that the ministration of the Spirit is kept altogether separate from the moral government of God. He requires obedience, he denounces threaten-

ings against sin, he will judge and punish the ungodly, quite irrespectively of the influence of the Spirit; as it is manifest he must, since he does, and will do, all this to multitudes of persons to whom the Spirit is not given. Now the moral government of God consists in the method of dealing with men by means of commands and motives, in the prospect of a final retribution; and, since this comprehends many to whom the Spirit is not given, it is plain that the moral government of God is carried on altogether irrespectively of the ministration of the Spirit.

The gift of the Spirit is a dispensation of eminent personal kindness, and of glorious effectual power. It becomes him so to work who can accomplish all things according to the counsel of his own will. It is honourable for him thus to secure to his Son the joy set before him, and to defeat the awful malignity of a rebellious world. It is an attitude in which, with manifest justice, he claims to himself all the glory of a sinner's salvation. It was his love which provided a Saviour, whom yet every sinner would have rejected without his overcoming grace. In this, therefore, as in his other works, God himself is all in all. To him alone, and in every respect, is it to be ascribed, that a single sinner has been rescued from hell and brought to heaven; and to him alone will the glory be rendered, while saints are happy or immortality endures. Amen, and Amen!

PRACTICAL ADDRESSES TO A SINNER,

ON THE PRINCIPLES MAINTAINED IN THE FOREGOING TREATISE.

THE design of these Practical Addresses is threefold. It is, first, to exhibit the principles which the author has been advocating in a form wholly apart from controversy. When a sentiment is much discussed, there is danger of its being supposed to be fit for nothing else; and persons who do not like controversy, or who may not be apt at argument, may put it aside as possessing no interest for them. Such an impression it is hoped the following pages may obviate or correct, and convince the reader that the principle which has been vindicated is capable also of being applied.

The author wishes, secondly, to bring his principles to a new and additional test. If they are of any value, that value lies in their just and forcible application to the conscience of a sinner. The question, therefore, is a fair one—How would you converse with a sinner on these principles? This question he has thus endeavoured to answer, whether satisfactorily to his readers they, of course, will judge; but, if it were not satisfactorily to himself, he would immediately suspect and review his principles.

But, above all, the author has been desirous of closing his book with these addresses, because, on so deeply important a subject as religion, he could not bear to write a volume of mere controversy. His readers, like himself, are sinners hastening to judgment and eternity; and he earnestly requests that they will do him the favour to read the following pages as addressed personally to themselves. Though he may never see them on earth, they will see him at the bar of God; and fain would he have every reader pour a blessing on him there! It will be either a blessing or a curse.

A brief observation may be necessary respecting the man-

ner in which these addresses are framed. They will, of course, be found to contain assertion and not argument, as from the nature of the case is inevitable; but an attentive reader will find no difficulty in referring to the pages in the preceding work, where the several points have been argued at length. The author has throughout avoided the use of the word power, the double meaning of which almost inevitably introduces perplexity into the plainest statements. Instead of this term he has used a just and exact equivalent; he has spoken of having the means of doing anything, which is the precise definition of power. He begs to add, finally, that these addresses are not to be regarded as comprehending all he would say to a sinner in the circumstances supposed, but only so much as may be connected with, or illustrative of, the sentiments which have been under consideration; and as presenting, even in this view, rather a skeleton than a complete body, the principles upon which the author would frame his appeal rather than the motives by which he would enforce it.

ADDRESS I.

Dear Reader,

I must address you, not as an innocent, but as a sinful person. It is not that I have pleasure in regarding you as such, but the Word of God declares us all to be so; and his Word is truth. I am willing, however, to converse with you on this subject rationally and coolly; indeed, I earnestly wish you to inquire into the grounds on which you are charged with guilt. By all means clear or defend yourself, if you can.

The general accusation brought against you by your Maker, is that you have not loved him with all your heart. Into the proof of this allegation I suppose it is not necessary to enter; you are probably too well convinced of its truth to dispute it for a moment.

I may imagine, however, that, while you admit the fact that you have not thus loved God, you dispute its crimi-

nality. Why, you ask, am I therefore condemned as a sinner? The question is highly reasonable, and extremely important; I readily confess that it behoves one who brings the charge of sin against you to be able to establish it by clear and conclusive proofs; and I will endeavour to meet your demand, as honestly as I hope you have put it.

1. That for which God censures you is not having loved him; or, in other words, he blames you for not having possessed a particular state of mind. This, therefore, is the first point upon which your inquiry bears. Upon what ground of justice does God require you to possess any particular state of mind at all? There are beings around you, I mean those of the brute creation, whose allowed occupation is nothing more than the gratification of their appetites, and the following of their several impulses. But this, it seems, is not the case with you. God requires of you something peculiar and specific. He is not satisfied that you should merely eat and drink, and act out the varied passions which may arise within you; but he prescribes a particular course, and demands this at your hands. Why should this be? It is because the constitution of your nature qualifies you to fulfil the demand. You are not a mere machine, the sport of circumstances, the victim of fate, or the helpless slave of your passions. To a certain extent, which we shall define presently, you have the means of attaining whatever state of mind you think proper.

It is your nature to love or to hate, to rejoice or to be sorry, as you find inducements to do so. You have also the means of judging of the various inducements which may be presented to you in every case, in order to estimate their proper force, and to determine how far you will yield to them or resist them. To qualify you for this exercise of judgment, God has given you a perception of good and evil, a sense of right and wrong, by which the character of all inducements may be ascertained, and your course respecting them decided accordingly. When you perceive any to be either right or wrong, you have the means also of establishing or preventing their influence, both by the superior force of the sense of duty itself, and by turning your attention to such considerations as are adapted to produce that effect. Now, since this is the case, and you may, by consideration, bring your mind to any state you think proper, it is mani-

festly not unjust that God should require your mind to be in some specific condition.

It is plain, indeed, as we have said, that this capacity of being what you think proper is not unbounded. It is limited by two considerations; the one is the proper force of the inducements presented to you, and the other is your capacity of appreciating them. As the state of your mind is to be regulated by consideration, it follows, of course, that the regulation of it can go no further than the proper force of the topics set before you for this end, and your capacity of appreciating them. If God should have required of you anything beyond these limits, I will make no attempt to maintain its justice; but if, on the contrary, the commands of your Maker are confined to the extent within which you are able to be what you think proper, and are in all cases accompanied with inducements both suitable and sufficient, and well adapted to your apprehension, upon what ground can their justice be impugned?

2. Let us pass on, then, from the fact of such requirement, the justice of which we will take to be admitted, to the tenor of the requirement itself. What is it that your Maker requires of you?

Receive this information from the lips of our divine Lord, Luke x. 27: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."

Such is the law of God given to man, and to every man, as the rule and measure of his demand. You may observe, that it intimates the existence of strength to be what it commands: otherwise, what meaning could there be in the language itself, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy strength," if we had no strength for this purpose? You should observe also, very particularly, that the employment of our strength in the way prescribed is the whole scope of the law. It specifies nothing in reference to the quantity of strength which we may or may not have; but, taking this at whatever it may happen to be, it makes our actual strength the precise limit of its demands. With all our strength we are to love God, but no further. You will mark, therefore, how accurately the requirements of your Maker observe the limitation which justice demands; they extend no further than the space within which you are able to be what you think proper.

3. It still remains to ascertain whether the requirements of God are accompanied by suitable and sufficient inducements.

Here let us recollect, that all which God requires of us is to love him, the outward obedience he prescribes being no other than the fruit of love. Has he, therefore, presented to us suitable and sufficient inducements to love him? The question surely needs no answer. He is the Lord our God; and out of this fact alone inducements of unquestionable sufficiency arise. He is God our Maker, the author of our being, with all its powers; and what obligation is more strong than this, that the parent should be treated with affectionate kindness by his offspring? He is the Lord our Maker: a being of infinite superiority, excellency, and majesty, in comparison with whom we are less than nothing and vanity, and with whose glory our whole hearts should be identified. Can other or stronger inducements be needful, ere we have cause enough to love him?

4. The last question to be asked is, whether these inducements to love God are set before us in a way suited to our apprehension. I imagine you can entertain little doubt upon this point. It is impossible to conceive either sentiment or language more plain or simple. It is only that children ought to love their parents; a truth which we perceive with the utmost clearness, and the force of which we feel instantaneously, not merely because of its evidence, but because it is intimately interwoven with our own relations. No sentiment could be better adapted to our apprehension than this.

Let us now recall what has been said. God requires you to possess a specific disposition. You are able to attain specific dispositions, so far as suitable and sufficient inducements are intelligibly set before you. Suitable and sufficient inducements are thus set before you, in reference to that particular disposition which God requires you to cherish, namely, love to himself. You are therefore justly required to love God; and if so, in not having loved him you have been guilty of sin. Let me exhibit this to you in another light.

Understand, then, that your power over your own mind lies entirely in your capacity of attention and consideration. The state of your mind always corresponds with the things you think of; and, when you wish it to be in any particular

state, if there are any intelligible topics suited and sufficient to induce the state desired, think duly of them, and it will be effected. This is the constitution of your mind: it cannot act otherwise, and in this method it will act invariably. In order to love God, therefore, what had you to do? Obviously to think of him. Reflecting upon the fact that he is the author of your being, and of all your powers; dwelling upon his boundless glory and excellency in this relation to you; doing this with all the helps to be derived from his works and from his Word; and persisting in it, until these topics had been adequately apprehended by your understanding, and had exerted their just influence upon your feelings; doing this, you would have loved him. Why did you refuse consideration to these things? You knew they were right and important, much more important than the other matters to which you surrendered your thoughts; yet you did surrender your thoughts to other things, and to things which have not only left you without love to God, but have induced an habitual and confirmed aversion to him. Your own judgment condemns you; and God, who is greater than your heart, and knoweth all things, how shall not he condemn you? Acknowledge, therefore, that you are justly reckoned a sinner; that your mouth is stopped from every excuse, and that you have only to plead guilty before God.

ADDRESS II.

I HAVE already endeavoured to show you, dear reader, that for not having loved God you are justly chargeable with sin. I must now set before you another painful but certain truth; namely, that for sin God will bring you into judgment. Your conduct he not only considers to be wrong, but he holds you answerable for it. He has suspended upon it consequences of the deepest interest. If you had loved him with all your heart, you would have found in his friendship unspeakable and perpetual blessedness; and, seeing that you have not done so, wrath is revealed against you from heaven. A day of retribution is already announced, when he will say,

"As for this mine enemy, who would not that I should reign over him, cast him into outer darkness, where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth."

The aspect of these things is in the utmost degree solemn and awful; and you are perfectly justified in inquiring into the reasonableness of such an administration. You will perhaps propose some such question as this: But, allowing it to be just that I should love God, what right has he to make this demand of me, and to call me to an account for my conduct?

His right to do so springs out of the one great fact that he is your Creator. As the author of your being, the arrangement of everything relating to your condition lay in his own bosom; and he has a right to require from his creatures whatever return agrees with their capacity and their circumstances. Wherever anything is given, there something may be required; and much or little, according to that which has been bestowed. You act upon this principle with an entire persuasion of its justice, when you call to account an undutiful child, a disobedient servant, or an agent to whom you have entrusted property. Your Maker does nothing more respecting yourself. Being a creature of God, therefore, you are in fact under a rightful obligation to love him, from which, dislike it as you may, you can never escape. The only questions for you to ask on this subject are, Whether the return which God requires is greater than the means bestowed; and whether the punishment he denounces is greater than the criminality incurred. Let us examine them.

1. I conceive you to ask, first, whether the return that God requires from you is not greater than the means he has bestowed; or whether he is not gathering where he has not strawed.

What God requires is that we should love him with all our hearts. We ask, then, whether he has, or has not, given us the means of doing this. In order to an answer we must push the question back, and inquire wherein the means of doing it consist. Now the means of loving God with all our hearts consist, first, in having a heart so constituted as duly and certainly to feel such inducements to love as may be presented to the understanding; and secondly, in having intelligibly presented to the understanding suitable and sufficient inducements to love God supremely. These things

being so, then we have the means of loving God with all our hearts, for, in such circumstances, it requires only consideration to produce this result. But these are in fact the constitution and circumstances of man; whence it follows that man has the means of loving God with all his heart. And if this be the case, when God requires man to love him with all his heart, he does not require more than he has given him means to fulfil, nor, therefore, an unreasonable return for what he has bestowed. He gathers what he has strawed, and no more. He has bestowed the talents, and expected nothing from us but to use them according to our several ability.

2. In relation to the system of responsibility, I conceive you to ask, secondly, whether the punishment denounced be not greater than the criminality incurred. Not to have loved God appears to you an unimportant fault, and one for which it is very unreasonable that you should be sent to hell, and made to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire.

Let me here request you in the outset, not to be misled by the awful metaphorical terms so frequently employed to describe the divine anger. I know that the Scripture speaks of God's *fury*, and of the future sufferings of the wicked as *unquenchable fire;* nor have I any wish to retract or qualify anything that is declared in the Word of God. But it is plain that these terms are metaphorical, and not literal; and that they do not describe the punishment of the wicked, or tell us what it is, but only illustrate it by comparing it with other things, more or less adapted to exhibit its character. I feel quite justified in saying, therefore, that, according to Scripture, hell is not fire, nor worms, nor chains, nor darkness. If you ask me what then hell is, I answer, it is the suffering of God's disapprobation. If again you ask me what is the meaning of such frightful expressions, I say that they are intended to show how awful God's disapprobation is. Their force is to prove, doubtless, that God's disapprobation is a very dreadful thing; but still it is only God's disapprobation that they are brought to illustrate. Divested of metaphor, the simple statement is, that, if you have not loved him as required, he will both disapprove your conduct, and express his disapprobation towards you in such a way as will make you directly sensible of it. The severe suffering which this will occasion will arise, not from any violence on

his part, but from the glory of God himself, and the intimate connexion there is between his approbation and the final happiness of every intelligent creature.

The question properly before us, therefore, is, whether the disapprobation of God is a disproportionate recompense for not having loved him supremely. This is just like asking whether our not loving God supremely is any fault at all; for, if it be, it would seem that disapprobation must justly follow it, on the common principle of disapproving whatever is wrong. This is a case, moreover, in which criminality is very manifest. For God has given us the means of loving him supremely; and, if we had not neglected the sense of right which prompted us to it, and refused the consideration by which it would have been produced, we should certainly have realized the fulfilment of his will. Do this refusal and resistance constitute no fault, and deserve no blame? Then nothing can do so; the very words should be obliterated from the language of men, and disapprobation in any and every respect for ever banished from the world. Were any servant to fail of his duty to us on the same ground, we should reprove him with just severity; nor will our Maker and our Judge be unjust, when, for such returns, he shall enter into judgment with us.

Mark well, dear reader, the conclusion to which we are come. You would fain not give an account of yourself to God; just as a person of high spirit would rather not be a servant or a steward, but in a state of independence. Now I will not here insist upon the obvious fact, that your unwillingness makes no difference at all in the certainty that you must stand in judgment hereafter; but rather press upon you the truth, that, in bringing you into judgment, God does you no wrong. He has a right to judge you, which you yourself acknowledge to be equitable, because it is the same by which you bring your servants to account before you. Although your Maker did not previously consult your inclination in this respect, he has in fact given you means of action to employ for him. He had a right to confer them, because he conferred your existence; and, having done so, he has a right to hold you answerable for the just use of them, however you might prefer a different course, or wish that you had never possessed them at all.—And as you cannot reasonably object to being held answerable, so neither,

in the next place, can you claim to be held answerable for less than God requires. He demands only that you should love him with the strength you have, while he sets before you inducements to this which are amply sufficient, and which consideration would render effectual. No requirement can be more reasonable, and no standard, therefore, more righteously adopted in judgment. Having failed in this, you have no justification, nor anything to plead in bar of condemnation.—Equally impossible, in the last place, will it be for you, when sentence passes against you as a sinner, to complain of your treatment. Your punishment will be only the disapprobation of your Maker. What can it be less? Or what ought it to be less? It is a recompense which sin most justly deserves, and which no sinner can with any show of reason expect to escape, in a degree proportioned to the measure of his criminality.

Is it not time for you to consider, therefore, what this condemnation is? Know you not that God's disapprobation is set forth by figures of fearful import, and language indicating it to be the source of intense and unutterable suffering? Is not judgment at hand? Will its doom admit of any reversion? Is not your state as a sinner dreadful, and powerfully adapted to awaken your anxiety? Will you not cry, are you not even now crying, What must I do to be saved? O to escape from the wrath to come!

ADDRESS III.

O Sinner, guilty and condemned! God, who is rich in mercy, is not unmindful of your misery. He knew it long before it was discovered by yourself, and of his own infinite kindness has provided a remedy. He hath so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. This is the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world; for the chastisement of our peace was upon him, that by his stripes we might be healed. Though he knew no sin, yet was he made sin for us, that we might be made the

righteousness of God in him. As he died for our offences, so he was raised again for our justification; and, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us, he is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him. His invitations are most ample and encouraging. Hear his call: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; for him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

This is for you good tidings of great joy. Every thing needful to your salvation is complete, and salvation itself is fully prepared for your possession, the glorious gift of free and sovereign grace. You are called upon to make no atonement, to shed no blood, to offer no expiation; all this is superseded by the shedding of the blood of Christ. In order to have the benefit of his interposition, you are but to come to Christ, or to God through him. You are but to repent, and to believe on the Lord Jesus; for upon repentance your sins shall be blotted out, and whosoever believeth shall be saved. But this you must do; for except we repent we shall all likewise perish, and he that believeth not shall yet be condemned.

Nor is this a matter of mere necessity in order to your escape from ruin, it is enjoined upon you as itself a duty; your failing in which will be regarded by God as directly criminal, and more deeply so than your primary violation of his law. Your not embracing the Redeemer he holds to be a greater sin than your not having loved your Creator. This is the grand manifestation of character to which he now looks; it is the chief matter which he will bring into judgment; and, if you should be finally condemned, it will be pre-eminently because you have not believed on the name of the only-begotten Son of God.

You perceive, therefore, dear reader, that you are still indispensably called into action. Something is prescribed to you which you must do, or you are lost. Your future and eternal condition actually turns upon this point. This is a state of things which may reasonably engage your severe inquiry. Its aspect on one hand is that of most animating hope—you may be saved; but it wears on the other an appearance of hard necessity—you must repent.

1. What is it that is thus required of you?

I need not at present enter further into this question than

to say, that it is a state of mind. The phrases coming to Christ, repenting, believing, and whatever others may be used in the same reference, strictly and uniformly import a state of mind, and nothing more. Now this is well worthy of your observation. This was what the law of God required of you in the first instance; and it is what the Gospel, with all its riches of grace, requires of you in the second: the two methods of divine proceeding you perceive to be framed on one and the same principle, namely, the perfect equity of calling upon you to acquire a specific state of mind.

2. But where is the equity of your being thus left, and of salvation being poised on the single circumstance of your attaining a prescribed state of mind?

Observe, then, that you still have the means of attaining to any state of mind to which suitable and sufficient inducements are set before you. The means of doing this consist solely in the faculty of consideration, with a heart that answers to it, both of which you have, if you are of sound mind; there is nothing inequitable, therefore, in suspending your salvation on the attainment of any state of mind, if suitable and sufficient inducements to it are exhibited. We must go on to ask, then, in the next place, whether any motives are presented to you suited and sufficient to induce you to repent.

3. The answer to this question is easy, but it can scarcely be brief. The Scripture is full of reasons why you should repent. It exhibits the holy law and righteous authority of God, the force and justice of your obligations to him, together with the multitude and aggravation of your sins, both of heart and life, in a manner so powerful as to cover you with shame. It represents your misery under the present influence of sin, and your danger of future and eternal perdition, in a light most deeply and awfully affecting. It shows you the wonderful extent of the divine goodness and long-suffering, and the boundless love of our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for you, and beseeches you to be reconciled to God. It quickens you by conviction, it warns you of wrath, it cheers you with hope, it woos you by love, it urges you by the near approach of death and judgment; and I may safely appeal to you whether these are not sufficient reasons why you should repent. Your conscience testifies that they are; and that, if you do not repent, you are acting in defiance

of all the weightiest considerations which can ever be brought to bear upon the minds of men. In no case are motives exhibited to you having a thousandth part of the force of these.

Let us return, therefore. For, if you have the means of attaining to any state of mind to which suitable and sufficient inducements are set before you, and if there are set before you suitable and sufficient inducements to the prescribed state of mind on which salvation depends, then you have the means of attaining that state of mind, and, with it, salvation itself. You are, consequently, most equitably treated. Salvation is put into your own hands, and, if you lose it, it will be your own fault; it will be because you have not done that which you have the means of doing. It is quite time, then, that you should arouse yourself to action, lest, while you sleep, your destruction come. You cannot sleep and be safe.

4. I may perhaps imagine your next question to be this: But how am I to attain a different state of mind from that in which I am? A very important inquiry, truly, and one most readily answered. You are to produce what effects you think right on the state of your own mind, by the consideration of topics adapted to your design; such topics being sure to act according to their nature if duly weighed, and being also sure to accomplish the object if in themselves sufficient for that purpose. We have already seen, that the truths exhibited as inducements to the state of mind with which salvation is connected are sufficient for that purpose; if, therefore, you wish to attain that state of mind, give due attention to them, and they will not fail of their effect. It is precisely for this effort of attention that God himself calls upon you. "O that they were wise," says he, "and would consider these things!" Hence also the numberless instances in which he requires men to hearken to him, which is accurately expressive of attentive hearing: "Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live." This, in truth, may be regarded as the primary thing which God demands of you, since he himself has so arranged other points that, if you do this, everything else will certainly follow which may fulfil his commands and secure your own welfare.

5. Here you may, perhaps, wish to know more particularly what the state of mind connected with salvation is. I

have called it, in scripture language, coming to Christ, repentance, and faith; it is also called in the Sacred Word being reconciled to God. All these convey the same general idea of a total change of your feelings on religious subjects, especially manifested by a submissive acquiescence in the way of salvation by the death and righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. The truths which are adapted and sufficient to effect this change are contained in God's Holy Word; and the consideration of them which will infallibly lead to this result, is nothing more than an honest, teachable, and persevering one, such as you very well know the case to deserve. It does not, indeed, need more than a single moment's realizing view to decide your feelings; but, certainly, you will not have fulfilled one half of your duty in this respect, before your heart will be broken with penitence and inflamed with love.

I will now only ask you, whether this is more than your soul is worth? Whether, if you perish through the refusal of such a method, you will not be chargeable with your own ruin, and give yourself cause for bitter and unanswerable reproaches? Shall I now leave you to enter into your chamber, and look full in the face those heart-stirring things which are arrayed for your contemplation? The Lord meet with you there!

ADDRESS IV.

Perhaps you will assure me, dear reader, that you have often thought of divine things, and have often prayed too, and have not found any beneficial effect. I am not willing to suspect you of an attempt to deceive me, but I fear you are deceiving yourself. First, as to your prayers. Have not many, have not all of them been characterized by formality? You have been upon your knees; but did you express any real desire before God? Many persons are so ignorant as to call it prayer, when they merely repeat a form, such as the Lord's prayer, or the church collects, or some other. But if you are not so ignorant as this, you may recol-

lect many instances in which your prayers have been in word only; and when, whatever words may have passed from your lips, your heart was quite vacant of desire. Or, if you think you have at any time expressed real desire before God, what have you desired? Perhaps pardon, deliverance from hell, or some similar blessing; but you have desired them apart from holiness. You may easily be convinced, I think, that this never was your desire; neither is it so now. You have never, therefore, put up a prayer that God could listen to for a moment. You have never cultivated a spirit of reconciliation to God. He has never seen you at his throne but as a rebel, cherishing your enmity to him, while you would fain cover yourself from his deserved indignation. You have never placed yourself in an attitude of peace before him, for you have not submitted to the righteousness of his Son; you have never assumed a position, therefore, in which, as a just and holy God, he could listen to your supplications. Or you may have betaken yourself to prayer as a refuge from duty. You do not like the trouble of thinking, and of contending with the evils of your own heart; but to pray, in your notion of it, is a much easier thing; and therefore you have recourse to prayer, in order to justify yourself in neglecting consideration. Or perhaps you imagine, that by praying you do all that you can, and therefore all that you ought; and, finding that prayer does no good, you comfort yourself, it may be, that your prevailing worldliness is no longer your fault, but that you have shifted the blame of it upon your Maker. "I have prayed," you are ready to say, "and what can I do more?" Herein you altogether mistake, both your primary duty, and the only means of changing the state of your mind. These are not prayer, but consideration. Excellent as prayer is in itself, prayer without consideration is both useless and absurd: yet more, it is wicked; it shows that your heart really cleaves to sin, and only wants a cover for its obstinacy.

Next, as to your assertion that you have often thought of religious subjects without benefit.

1. It is only a few of them, I suspect, that have engaged your attention. Are there not many aspects of divine things, to which you must acknowledge you have never given any consideration at all? Have you even at any time taken the pains to inquire, whether there were not some other

serious and important truths adapted to affect the heart? Most certainly you have not. Your conscience has laid hold upon some few of the truths of religion which happened to come in its way, and so you have given them a thought; but a far greater number of the topics fitted to convert the heart are yet to you as things unknown. Look carefully into the Word of God, and see if it be not so. And can you expect so partial and inaccurate a view of truth to produce the effect which you profess to desire?

2. I may probably say, too, that your attention has not been fixed upon the topics best adapted to affect your heart. Perhaps some conviction of outward sin, rather than a view of inward corruption; perhaps a thought of the wrath to come, without a touching recollection of him that is willing to save; perhaps a cherished idea that the vilest sinner may be saved, apart from the remembrance that the wicked must forsake his way. How can such mutilated thoughts as these produce the effect you profess to have desired? They much more probably minister, by an easy perversion, to your tranquil continuance in sin.

3. To this it may be added, that to the topics which have entered your mind you have given a very slender and inadequate attention. You have often thought of these things, you say. How often? Have you thought of them every day, with the morning light and the evening shade; and has the savour of them been spread through your busy hours? The very question startles and confounds you. By often thinking of religion you mean that you have thought of it occasionally, once in a few months, or a few weeks, or a few days, which is often enough for you. And when you do think of serious things, how do you think of them? Do you set apart a portion of time to entertain them, with the advantage of retirement, and of a mind withdrawn as far as may be from worldly vanities and cares? Do you then take from God's own Word the representations of eternal things, and endeavour to bring them home to your heart with their utmost power? Have you repeated this exercise every day through any considerable length of time? I know you cannot answer me these questions. You have done nothing like this. Your thoughts of religion have been only such as have floated across your mind amidst worldly concerns, never welcomed, and seldom entertained for a moment; thoughts

which you have been more pleased to forget than ready to recall. Or, if ever you have gone into solitude to pursue such reflections, it has been but occasionally, and you have yielded speedily to the feelings of indifference or worldly love, which solicited your abandonment of so unwelcome an employ. And did you ever expect that such thoughts of religion would be influential? If they were, religion must be very unlike to everything else; for, on no other subject would such thoughts lead to any beneficial result. Nor did you ever believe that you were giving to religious subjects the consideration they deserved. It is highly probable that you never even asked yourself whether you were paying them a due regard or not; certainly, whenever you might have done so, your own conscience would have told you that you were not. And yet, though you cannot make any pretensions to having paid such a regard to religious subjects as you know they deserved, you complain that you have thought of them without effect!

4. I may charge you with yet a further fault. You have shown no willingness to yield to the force of such thoughts as may have been brought to your mind. When you have been convinced of sin, you have not taken up that conviction thus:—"Now I see that this is wrong; I ought to be sorry for it, and loathe it, and humble myself before God on account of it." When a thought of eternity has entered your mind, you have made no attempt to apply it, as by saying, "O my soul, think of this! I am soon to be either in heaven or in hell; and what manner of person ought I to be!" The same might be said of every other truth. You have not tried, you have not wished, that they should influence you, but have felt rather glad to evade their influence by forgetfulness, if not to destroy it by inviting thoughts of a contrary tendency. And can you wonder that your thoughts of religion have been powerless?

5. I will direct your attention to one circumstance more, which will show you that the truths of religion are in fact powerful, to the full extent to which they are considered. You have never entertained a thought of religion for a moment, which did not produce some effect. Whenever you have thought about it, under whatever aspect, you have found that it had a tendency to make you serious, and even anxious; and, if you have at any time thought of it more

closely, or for a longer period, you have found this tendency more strong. What is this but a decisive testimony to the power of religious truths over the heart, as far as consideration is given to them? Suppose you had carried the consideration of them further? Their influence, of course, would have been greater. Suppose you had given them the full consideration you knew them to deserve? Their influence would have been greater still; nay, it would have been decisive and effectual. There is no reason why they have not induced you to repent, but because you have treated them with consciously unmerited neglect.

Remember, therefore, dear reader, that this excuse also is taken away from you. If you repent, it must arise from reflection; it can arise from no other means, and it will infallibly arise from this. The question is, Will you, or will you not, attend to God's call? If you will not, his indignation will justly follow your rebellious obstinacy. If you will, enter into your closet, and consider duly the objects adapted to prevail with you; and the Lord meet with you there!

ADDRESS V.

Well, my friend, have you been into your closet? I will conceive you, dear reader, to say that you have, and that you are still prepared to complain of not finding the advantages you had been led to expect. Have you, then, duly reflected on the solemn truths relating to your eternal welfare? You cannot, probably, say that you have. You have been alone, but your thoughts have been drawn aside by other objects, and you have not fixed them on divine things for even a few moments. Allow me then to observe, that it is no wonder the state of your mind has undergone no change. This was to result from due consideration, and from that alone; but you have given no due consideration to serious things, and for this reason they have produced no effect. I may still maintain, therefore, that due consideration will be effectual, and might again press it upon you. But if I were to urge you to return to your chamber, you would perhaps say, It is

useless: I cannot reflect. Let me know, however, what you mean when you say you cannot reflect. You do not mean to say that the exercise of reflection, or consideration itself, is impracticable to you? You can still reflect on matters of worldly business, or give attention to the affairs of life; only you cannot attend to the concerns of religion. I understand you, then; and it is important that you should understand yourself. The consideration of religious subjects is so unwelcome to you that your heart shrinks from it; your feelings have so much levity and worldliness in them, that they drive away all serious thoughts. Do you call this not being able to reflect? It is surely not being willing to reflect, or rather being determined that you will not. What are those light and wicked feelings of yours, that they are to banish matters of the utmost moment from your regard, and even to prevent your thinking of them? Or what are you but a foolish and a wicked man, to suffer them to do so? Would you permit similar causes to draw you from an examination of your worldly affairs? Why, then, from an inquiry into the state of your soul?

You are, however, learning by experience one thing, which, though you may have often heard it, you never knew or believed, probably, till now; you are learning the plague of your own heart. Must it not be an evil heart which is so reluctant to look at the things of another world, which refuses to be brought at all into contact with them, and pertinaciously baffles every effort at consideration by its cherished worldliness and levity? See also to what awful consequences it leads. You are thus induced to trifle with your own soul and your most important interests, to reject your Saviour, and to defy your Judge. You waste time, you forget eternity, and you leave death, judgment, and hell, to come at their leisure, and overwhelm you with unutterable terrors. Are you not amazed at your own image? Resolute trifler that you are, what will become of you? Whither will this wicked heart conduct you, but to everlasting sorrow?

You must not, however, imagine for a moment that this reluctance which baffles you, affords any justification, or even any excuse, for your inconsideration and neglect. What is itself wicked can furnish no excuse for other wickedness. Your heart is evil; but see to it, for it should be good, and God commands you to make it so. "Make you a new heart,

and a new spirit," says he, Ezek. xviii. 31; and again, "Wash thine heart from wickedness," Jer. iv. 14. This command, you perceive, proceeds upon the principle already stated, that, when sufficient inducements to any state of mind are presented to us, that state of mind may be justly required at our hands, because consideration will infallibly produce it. For the correction of your evil heart, therefore, you are still thrown back on the necessity and the sufficiency of consideration.

You may, perhaps, think of relieving yourself from your present difficulty by another method. You may think of prayer, and of the many encouragements to it which are given us in the Holy Scriptures; and may be ready to say, "Will it not be serviceable if I ask God to give me a new heart and a right spirit?"

Now prayer, however seemingly excellent and beneficial, differs essentially in its nature and effects, according to the character and situation of those who offer it. Whenever it is of such a kind, and presented under such circumstances, that a holy and righteous God can accept and answer it, it is unquestionably a most beneficial exercise; but, should this not be the case, it is difficult to conceive that any advantage can arise from it at all. Rejected prayer must clearly be useless.

But perhaps you ask, and not without surprise, "Can any prayer be rejected? And especially prayer for a new heart?" Let us calmly consider this question for a moment.

I know that God is merciful, unutterably merciful. But is he not also holy? Is he not of purer eyes than to behold iniquity? Is he not towards transgressors a consuming fire? You are unholy, and deeply polluted by sin: how can you approach this holy Lord God? Or, if you do, what can await you, but an expression of his abhorrence and disgust?

I know that God is merciful: but is he not also just? And, as a righteous governor and judge, is he not necessitated to maintain an inflexible administration of his law? By that law (since you have broken it) you are condemned to the forfeiture of your whole interest in his friendship, and set apart to an approaching and final destruction. In such a situation, how can your prayers be heard? The officers of justice obstruct your admission to your Maker's presence, until you shall be summoned to hear your eternal doom. To

this you may answer, that the vilest of sinners is encouraged to pray through Jesus Christ. And this is true. But, before a sinner can *pray* to God through Christ, he must *look* to God through Christ. You cannot avail yourself of the mediation of Christ, until first you have accepted it. This is the very thing which God requires you to do, and upon the doing of which your eternal welfare is suspended. Do this, and everything is done; this is the very change of heart for which you are about to pray. But this is the very thing about which you make so much difficulty, and to which you offer so much resistance. In your present attitude, your unbelief is obstructing the acceptance of your prayers.

Besides, what is there in your prayers, that they deserve to be heard? You think you desire a new heart. But, if you really do so, why do you not apply yourself to that vigorous reflection on transforming topics by which you might produce it? The truth is, that you are going to pray merely because you do not like to work; you want to throw that upon God, which, although it is both your duty and your happiness, is too troublesome for you. Can you expect him to listen to such a request? Can he—can you—believe it to be even a sincere one?

How fallacious your idea is that every one who prays will be heard, you may clearly gather from various passages of Scripture, which designate no inconsiderable number of persons whom God will not hear. One of them I may quote from Proverbs xxviii. 9, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." It is worthy your inquiry, whether this is not precisely your own character. If you do not treat instruction with contempt, you allow yourself in a practical and prevailing neglect of it. You do not bring yourself to the full and fixed contemplation of divine things, to which you are summoned. You turn away your ear; and your prayer can be nothing but an abomination to the Lord.

What I have intended to show you by these remarks is, that, as a remedy for your present difficulty, prayer is useless. Do not imagine that prayer will save you. Prayer will not save any man; it has no adaptation to that end; it was never designed for it; and an expectation of being saved by it can arise only from a deep ignorance of your lost condition. The deliverance of a sinner from righteous condemnation requires

a sacrifice for sins, even the precious blood of Christ; and the method of securing to ourselves the advantage of his death is not by prayer, but by submitting to his righteousness. It is true that this state of mind may be exercised in prayer; but it is also true that prayer may be largely used without this state of mind. Everything depends upon this, and therefore your whole attention should be directed to it. By being unmindful of it, thousands of persons pray themselves into hell. Neither imagine that, having prayed, you have done your duty, and may leave the rest to God. Your direct, immediate, and indispensable duty is to repent, from the obligation and necessity of which prayer by no means relieves you. Neither deem it a hardship that you are called upon to effect a change in circumstances in which prayer is useless. What is your need of it, for a purpose for which consideration alone is sufficient? Betake yourself again, and with your utmost energy, to this only rational method of struggling with an evil heart. Struggle, as you would with an highwayman for your property, or with an assassin for your life. Neither let it be forgotten, how short a time you may have to try the experiment, and how soon he that hardeneth his neck may be destroyed without remedy. Remember that reflection is your last hope, and that, turning a deaf ear to this imperative call, you abandon yourself entirely to your own wickedness, and its dreaded results. Yet understand why and how it is that you perish. It is not because you do not pray, but because you do not repent. It is because you do not attain a particular state of mind, which you have the means of attaining, inasmuch as the truths set before you, being duly considered, will infallibly produce it. Do not endeavour, therefore, to shift the mischief or the guilt to any other quarter. They lie wholly with yourself. Your perdition is as much your own act, and you have as truly the means of preventing it, as if you had this moment a dagger in your hand, and I were speaking of your plunging it into your bosom. Will not all heaven weep, and all hell wonder, at the cool and dreadful obduracy with which you can perpetrate the deed of eternal sorrow?

ADDRESS VI.

May I hope that I meet you now, my dear reader, with pleasure? I trust you have at length submitted yourself to the Lord. You know what it is to take your affections away from a world to which you have so long given them, and to consecrate them to God, on the altar which the blood of Christ has sanctified. Is it not thus with you?

If you hesitate a moment in giving me an answer to this question, it is not because you feel that you must answer it in the negative, but only because you cannot yet say all that you desire. Your efforts of meditation have not been altogether in vain. You begin to see something, which hitherto you have not seen. There are strange heavings within your bosom; though as yet, perhaps, you seem only to learn your own ignorance and hardness of heart, and to be more blind and obdurate than ever, so that your condition appears to you to be awful indeed. Or perhaps you can say that the Lord has softened your heart, and enlarged it in submission; leading you as a lost and helpless sinner to the Saviour's footstool, and inspiring you with hope, if not with joy and peace, in believing.

Whatever the peculiarities of your case may be (and there are endless diversities in the operations of the same Spirit), I doubt not you will acknowledge that you are indebted to the blessed Spirit for every measure of beneficial change. It has been wrought in opposition to yourself, and in the face of long prevalent feelings, which have been broken down, and brought into captivity to Christ, by a power consciously not your own. Long did you resist, and still would you have resisted, had not a gracious friend disarmed you, and laid you low at his feet. If you are now willing instead of unwilling, it is because he has made you so in the day of his power.

To whom, therefore, have you to ascribe the glory? Manifestly to him who has wrought the change. It might have been to yourself, if you had shown any disposition towards it, or if you had of your own accord made use of the means in your possession; but, seeing that, with the means in your hands, you neglected the great salvation, and turned from

him that called you, what can ever belong to you but shame and confusion of face? All the praise is due to the God of your salvation. You are a monument of his mercy, a trophy of his victorious grace; and, while time or immortality endures, you will have to say, "Not unto me, not unto me, O Lord, but unto thy name be glory, for thy mercy's sake!"

While self-gratulation is thus destroyed, it is important you should learn also the greatness of your obligations. You should neither overlook, nor forget, what and how much grace hath done for you. It was much that Christ should die for you, and that a way should thus be opened for your reconciliation to God; but was it not hard, too, that you would not be reconciled? You wilfully cherished and perpetuated a state of enmity towards God. What might he not have done with you? But what did he do? Instead of leaving you to your obstinacy, he sent his own Spirit into your heart, to weary you of your evil ways, and constrain you to seek his face. He himself opened the heart which you locked against him; and the blessedness which he has shed abroad there is not of your seeking, but of his own bringing unsought. The first serious thought you entertained he inspired, and dictated the submission you rendered. Could he have done more, or could you have deserved less? And what does he now deserve of you, but a life of grateful purity and devotedness, immovable and unquenchable for ever?

At the same time it is worthy of your observation, that the blessed Spirit has wrought this change in you in a method adapted, not to contradict, but to confirm all your views of primary duty and guilt. What he has done may be summed up in this brief description—he has led you to consideration; and by the consideration of divine things he has transformed your heart. You are conscious that similar consideration of these things would, at any time, have had the same effect; so that, whatever doubt you may have affected respecting it before, you have convincing evidence now, that the means of repentance and salvation were in your own hands, and that your state of impenitence was one of entire wilfulness and deep criminality. Ah! why did you neglect these heart-subduing truths so long? With what bitterness and shame have you now to look back on that guilty period; and how powerfully should the recollection of

it animate you, while you endeavour to live henceforth to him that loved you, and gave himself for you!

You have received also a lesson of great importance respecting the future discipline of your heart. Although the reigning power of sin is broken, and the dispositions which now prevailingly operate within you are holy, you will perpetually find, perhaps you find already, that evil propensities retain considerable power, and will strive to regain the ascendancy. As it were in aggravation of this mischief, the new-born principles of holiness will discover, not only much actual feebleness, but a hasty tendency to decay. Hence will arise the necessity of a continual and vigorous discipline of your own heart, in order to further the progressive, and even to maintain the existing influence of spiritual feeling. You will need little to impress upon you the importance of this object. Your happiness, your usefulness, and the glory of God by you—your fitness for duty, for temptation, and for sorrow—your readiness for death, for judgment, and for heaven—the very evidence of your sincerity itself, and everything that is dear to you as a Christian, are identified with the permanence and advancement of the change you have experienced. If it should become stationary or decay, your condition will be characterized both by guilt and wretchedness. Establishment and growth in grace, however, cannot be secured, or rationally expected, without diligent endeavour. It has never been attained by abandoning oneself to accidents, or by confiding in the innate power of piety. Growing Christians have always been laborious ones. It will be indispensable for you, therefore, to maintain over your own heart a close watch and a resolute discipline. If you should ever find yourself at a loss for the means of doing this, you may derive instruction from reviewing the process of your conversion. The means by which the prevalence of carnality was disturbed and broken, was consideration; and by consideration must it be pursued to its final extermination. As piety arises out of an impressive view of divine realities, so it will bear an invariable proportion to the intensity with which they are habitually contemplated. If you would be a steady and growing Christian, you must be a person of habitual meditation on the things of God; I mean of realizing influential meditation, bringing the powers of the world to come into effective

application to your own mind. To this end a habit of daily retirement will very much contribute, and it is a habit of more importance than any other to the stability and strength of piety. In your chamber your perception of divine things will in all probability be most vivid; there your self-application of them will certainly be most easy and unimpeded. There you will most distinctly realize the existing carnality of your mind, and there, if at all, will the great struggle with it be carried on. Above all things, therefore, maintain, with unflinching resolution, amidst whatever difficulties, the habit of daily retirement for consideration and prayer. To suffer it to be broken in upon is to allow yourself to be materially weakened; to relinquish it is to abandon yourself to ruin.

Should you, in the course of your experience, ever find the inward conflict so severe as to discourage you, and be led to doubt whether the utmost diligence of meditation and spiritual culture will conquer a heart so evil as you may find yours to be, do not hastily despond. Great as the power of temporal things may be, that of eternal things is far greater. Only realize them by intent contemplation, and you will feel them to be so. Sin within you may strive, but, while you maintain such an attitude, it will not prevail. You have gone through one conflict in which things unseen have triumphed, and from hence may gather an assurance that they will triumph again. No man yet has left us the testimony, that this world subdued him while his eye was fixed upon that which is to come; and, if you mark your own experience, you will invariably find that the advantages which our adversary obtains over us are gained by drawing us off from converse with eternity. However hard the battle may be, therefore, do not distrust your weapon. Only use it manfully in fighting the good fight of faith, and you shall lay hold of eternal life.

AN

EXPOSITION

OF THE

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

ON THE

PRINCIPLES OF SCRIPTURE PARALLELISM.

WITH AN

INTRODUCTION AND AN APPENDIX.

PREFACE.

WHAT need is there of another Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans? Or why should I have written one, who have no pretensions to the acquirements, literary or theological, which must be deemed indispensable qualifications for the task?

To this most just inquiry, with which my book is sure to be greeted by "a discerning public," I reply at once with perfect frankness. I write because I have something to say which no one has said before me, and something which I deem so practically useful as to be worth the saying. Assuredly, I am far from being the first person who has applied the method of Scripture parallelism to the interpretation of the Sacred Writings; but I am the first, so far as I know, to have applied it so extensively as an instrument of expository elucidation.

I may now say that the following work contains the substance of a series of Discourses delivered at Devonshire Square Chapel during the years 1860, 1861, and 1862; and that I give it to the world at the earnest request of some of my hearers.

To this statement I may add that the volume may be regarded as in some sense the work of my ministerial life. I was young in the ministry when Jebb's Sacred Literature fell into my hands; and I have never departed from the direction which the perusal of this (to me) invaluable work gave to my efforts at Biblical interpretation. It was not long before I applied the method of Scripture parallelism to the explanation of the Epistle to the Romans; and on this method I have, in the course of a ministry of forty years, three times expounded it—once at Reading, and twice in London. On the first of these occasions I printed on a broad-sheet the Epistle as arranged, and on the second of them I printed it with some variations in a small pamphlet;

and although neither of these was published, some copies may yet be extant in the hands of my friends. Should any of them take the trouble to make a comparison, they will find in this third edition also some variations, but there is a perfect identity of method in them all; and I cannot lose this opportunity of testifying that the habitual practice of forty years has amply confirmed my conviction of its justice and value. I am well aware that even long and oft-repeated consideration affords no proof that my judgment as an expositor has become either sagacious or mature; if, however, such latent hope in this direction as I must confess to the existence of should not be confirmed by the opinion of the best qualified judges, I shall, at least, have the satisfaction of having presented to them the result of no cursory or superficial reflection.

The reader, of course, will not expect to find here a general treatment of the critical questions to which the Epistle to the Romans has given rise. On these I have nothing that is new to say; and I can only refer such of my readers as are anxious for the best opinions concerning them to the well-known critical commentators.

I had, of course, a question to determine as to the text of the Epistle which I should adopt. Upon consideration I have not chosen the *Textus Receptus*, from which our authorized version was formed; but I have on the best critical grounds preferred the text of Tischendorff, in the seventh edition of his *Novum Testamentum Græce*. The variations are neither numerous nor important; but if now and then one should strike the reader, he will after this intimation know to what source to ascribe it.

Although I make no pretensions to have executed a new translation of the Epistle, I have used in this respect an unfettered freedom, and have not suffered myself to be in any bondage to the authorized version. I have not studied a *literal* rendering of the original. The construction of the Greek language does not appear to me to be favourable to such a process, and certainly the result of attempts which have been made in this direction is far from encouraging. Neither have I made myself dependent in any degree on the punctuation of the Greek Testament, as all scholars know I need not. My aim has been to convey in intelligible English what I believe to have been the meaning of the writer; or,

in other words, to give a translation which may be understood without a commentary. If in order to effect this I have sometimes varied the grammatical construction, sometimes supplied words and even parts of sentences which seem to be wanting, and sometimes expanded phrases of extreme condensation, I beg only that my freedoms may not be immediately condemned, but may be judged of by their result. If my translation may be deemed in some cases paraphrastic, I still hope that it may be accepted, not as a paraphrase, but as a translation.

The method which I have pursued has been this. In the body of the Exposition I have inserted the Epistle in such portions as the apostle's course of thought seemed to me to require or to permit, freely translated, and arranged in parallel lines. This arrangement is not adopted under the idea that the Epistle is poetical, but because the parallelism of thought and of expression apparent in the original cannot, without this contrivance, be made so clearly discernible to the English reader. Not *all* the art employed in the composition can even so be made apparent, the full perception of it requiring the aid of the Exposition itself. The minor parallelisms are exhibited in the treatment of the several passages. In relation to this matter I beg it may be clearly understood, that I have taken no freedoms with the arrangement of words in order to throw the composition into parallelism; but that in this respect I have strictly adhered to, and been guided by, the position of words in the original. I may, indeed, go farther than this, and say that, in some instances, the position of words in the original is so strongly parallelistic that they cannot be *directly* translated into English without a violation of their order. As an example of this the reader may take the twenty-eighth verse of the eighth chapter, which in the authorized version reads as follows:—

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

A perfectly proper translation. But mark now the order of the words in the original:—

οἴδαμεν δὲ ὅτι τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν τὸν θεὸν πάντα συνεργεῖ εἰς ἀγαθόν, τοῖς κατὰ πρόθεσιν κλητοῖς οὖσιν.

We know that, to those who love God, all things work together for good, to those who are called according to his purpose.

Why but for the sake of parallelism, or, I may perhaps say, under an impulse of parallelistic writing, are the two phrases—"those who love God" and "those who are called according to his purpose"—separated from each other, and so distributed as to throw the whole sentence into the form of an alternate parallelism?

οἴδαμεν δὲ ὅτι,
τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν τὸν θεὸν,
πάντα συνεργεῖ εἰς ἀγαθὸν,
τοῖς κατὰ προθεσιν κλητοῖς οὖσιν.

We know that,
To those who love God,
All things work together for good,
To those who are called according to his purpose.

The passage I have here presented is far from being a solitary instance.

The reader will find, however, that I have used—what may at first appear to him a great freedom—the freedom of severing and combining various passages, in order to attain unity and consecutiveness of thought. Whether I have been justified in these dislocations, which will be clearly pointed out where they occur, the attentive and judicious reader must decide.

Respecting these dislocations a question, of course, arises—not so much as to the fact of their occurrence, for that to an attentive eye is obvious—but whether they are consistent with the probable method of the writer, as interpreted by what is known of the literature of the era, and his position in relation to it. I confess that in a classical author it would perplex me beyond hope. I think, however, that I can find a solution in Paul's admitted mastery of Hebrew learning, and in his combined familiarity and skill in using the art and methods of Hebrew parallelism. If consistent with *any* style of composition, Paul's dislocations are consistent with this; and I do not think he goes beyond the license it allows.

At the close of the volume I have given a scheme of the Epistle as arranged, the chapters and verses being indicated. And in conclusion I have presented the entire Epistle in English, arranged under its various heads, and incorporating all the minor parallelisms. In this exhibition of it I have omitted all notice of chapters and verses, in order to follow

more closely the order of thought, and to allow the composition to make its own impression on the reader.

I know that this effort of mine, in order to be received favourably, will require to be received with much candour. An Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans is itself no light task, but its Exposition on the principles of Scripture Parallelism has many more difficulties and chances of mistake. To some the notion of parallelism itself will be offensive; to some the conception that a mere letter can have been composed with such elaborate art will be impossible; to some the linear divisions may appear inaccurate; to some the displacements may seem arbitrary and inadmissible. Doubtless my work has—it must have—many faults: I bespeak for it, however, not an uncritical, but a candid entertainment; and I expect most candour from those who have most Biblical learning and most exegetical practice.

INTRODUCTION.

I SHOULD be glad if I could safely assume that those into whose hands this Exposition may fall would be sufficiently acquainted with the method employed in it to spare me the necessity of explaining the method itself; but, since I do not think I can do so, I deem it incumbent on me in this place to present to the reader a summary view of what is known among Biblical critics as Scripture Parallelism.

A close and careful observation of the language of Holy Scripture, and of the manner of its composition, brings to light a feature in the formation of its sentences and paragraphs, if not absolutely peculiar, yet occurring there more largely than in any other known writings. The method is not universal, indeed, a very large portion of the Bible being written in the more ordinary mode; but its occurrence in many places is too manifest to be disputed. Here is an example:—

> The heavens declare the glory of God,
> And the firmament showeth his handy work. Psalm xix. 1.

In these two lines the terms in the second correspond with those in the first; or, to say the same thing in other words, the lines are *parallel* the one to the other. Now this structure of sentences is called *parallelism.*

Parallelism occurs a great deal too often in the Bible to be accounted for by calling it accidental. It is evidently a designed method of composition. Nor is it exclusively a poetical element, although the Hebrew poetry is eminently characterized by it; but it enters largely into prose writing, and into prose writing of all kinds. It is likewise greatly diversified, and in some instances highly elaborated and complex. It also extends beyond the formation of sentences into that of paragraphs; and it affects both the order of topics and the arrangement of arguments in whole books of Scripture.

And if all this be true, parallelism is surely a fact in the composition of the Scriptures well worthy of a student's regard.

It is not a mere assertion, perhaps, which will convince my reader that Scripture parallelism is a fact. Before he finally sets it down as a fancy, however, let him do both himself and the Bible the justice to weigh at least the few examples of it which I will here set before him.

Here are instances of the simplest form, or of what may be called direct parallelism :—

> Seek ye the Lord while he may be found,
> Call ye upon him while he is near. Isaiah lv. 6.

> Bless the Lord, O my soul,
> And all that is within me his holy name. Psalm ciii. 1.

> Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly,
> Nor standeth in the way of sinners,
> Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. Psalm i. 1.

When there is an antithesis in the thought, as in many proverbial sentences, the correspondence in the phraseology naturally takes a similar form. The following are examples of antithetic parallelism :—

> Faithful are the wounds of a friend,
> But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy. Proverbs xxvii. 6.

> Some in chariots, and some in horses,
> But we will remember the name of the Lord our God:
> They are brought down and fallen,
> But we are risen, and stand upright. Psalm xx. 7, 8.

Sometimes we meet with alternate parallelism :—

> I will make mine arrows drunk with blood,
> And my sword shall devour flesh;
> With the blood of the slain and the captive,
> From the hairy head of the enemy. Deut. xxxii. 42.

The following is an example of alternate parallelism somewhat more complex.

> I planted,
> Apollos watered,
> But God made to grow;
> So that neither he who planteth is anything,
> Nor he who watereth,
> But God who maketh to grow.
> 1 Corinthians iii. 7, 8.

In other cases there occurs a form of parallelism which has been fitly called introverted :—

> Give not that which is holy to the dogs,
> Neither cast ye your pearls before swine ;
> Lest they trample them under their feet,
> And turn again and rend you. Matthew vii. 6.

This form of parallelism is capable of great extension and elaboration, and of all forms of it is the most important in the uses to which it is applied. Its general principle may be thus explained. In any sentence which is formed in this method the first and last lines are in immediate connexion, the second and the last but one, and so on till all the members of the sentence are disposed of.

I now introduce an introverted parallelism from an argumentative composition. It consists of nine lines, the middle one having nothing to correspond with it.

> Because what is knowable of God is manifested to them;
> For God hath made it manifest to them—
> For his invisible attributes,
> Since the creation of the world,
> Being discerned by the things which are created,
> Have been clearly discoverable,
> Even his eternal power and Godhead;
> So that they are inexcusable,
> Because, knowing God, not as God did they worship or thank him.
> Romans i. 19–21.

The example last given illustrates very clearly the use and effect of the introverted parallelism when employed in an argumentative composition. Here the general theme is stated in the first two and the last two lines :—

> Because what is knowable of God is manifested to them,
> For God hath made it manifest to them:
>
> So that they are inexcusable,
> Because, knowing God, not as God did they worship or thank him.

And between these two lines is enclosed the proof by which the main assertion is sustained.

The aptness and sagacity of the arrangement thus adopted will probably be seen at a glance; or, if it should not be so, nothing more can be necessary than for the reader to try how the same argument reads when arranged in the ordinary mode. By means of parallelism the mind is kept mainly occupied with the general theme, which falls first and last on the eye or the ear, while that part of the argument

which is really subordinate occupies also a subordinate place —being by its position (withdrawn into the interior of the sentence) made to leave a less powerful, though still a distinct impression.

The principle of parallelism, I now go on to observe, is not confined to the construction of sentences; it extends also to the order and arrangement of topics, even when there is no parallelism in the phraseology. Below, for example, is an introverted parallelism of this kind from the historical portion of the Old Testament. It embraces three topics, which are first stated in a direct order and then re-stated in an inverse order, thus constituting an introverted parallelism of six members.

And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said—

> The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said—
>
> > The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.
> >
> > And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.
>
> Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it, cursed is the ground for thy sake, in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Genesis iii. 9–19.

Here we have first the man, then the woman, then the serpent; and afterwards the serpent, the woman, and the man. Similar cases abound both in the Old and the New Testament.

A still more extended application of the principle of parallelism is yet to be noticed. In some of the epistolary compositions of the New Testament it is apparently employed for the arrangement of the entire contents of an epistle. It

would occupy too much space if I was here to go into the illustration of this subject at any length; I will content myself with giving the following analysis of the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians.

Its general character is that of an introverted parallelism of four members: A, B; *B*, *A*. The two extreme members, A and *A* are epistolary; the two central members, B and *B* consist of three parts each, which parts correspond respectively in the order in which they stand. The following is a skeleton of the epistle.

A Chap. i. 1, 2. Epistolary.

B
- a. Chap. i. 3–10. Thanksgiving.
- b. Chap. i. 11, 12. Prayer.
- c. Chap. ii. 1–12. Admonition.

B
- a. Chap. ii. 13–15. Thanksgiving.
- b. Chap. ii. 16–iii. 15. Prayer.
- c. Chap. iii. 6–15. Admonition.

A Chap. iii. 6–18. Epistolary.

How far such an arrangement may be satisfactory to the reader it is not for me to say; perhaps, if the subject is wholly new to him, he may be rather startled than convinced. Familiarity, however, may aid his ultimate judgment. Especially let him take up the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, and read it according to the plan of it here suggested, that the fact—for it is believed to be a fact—may have an opportunity of presenting itself more vividly to him.

Such in a few words is the doctrine of Scripture Parallelism, according to which, and by means of which, I have expounded the Epistle of Paul to the Romans. The view which I have given of it is of necessity slight, because it is of necessity brief; I trust, however, that it will afford to an attentive reader sufficient light for the purpose for which I have designed it, and I shall be but too happy if it should lead my readers generally to pursue the subject in works which treat of it more largely. Great indeed are the obligations of Biblical students universally, as well as my own in particular, to the Prelections on Hebrew Poetry of Bishop Lowth, to the Sacred Literature of Bishop Jebb, and to the Tactica Sacra of Mr. Boys. From these admirable works all my illustrations—with, I believe, a single exception—have been taken, and I gratefully acknowledge myself their debtor.

AN EXPOSITION

OF THE

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

Its General Structure.

In a general view the Epistle naturally divides itself into two parts; the one consisting of a systematic treatment of the great Gospel verities, both doctrinal and practical, and the other of notices of sundry personal topics relating either to the writer himself, or to those to whom it was written. The former portion commences at chap. i. 17, and extends to chap. xv. 7, constituting the great bulk of the Epistle: the latter portion is to be found in two divisions; the first in chap. i. ver. 1 to 16, the second extends from chap. xv. 8 to the end of the Epistle. These may be called respectively the Epistolary and the Didactic portions.

In the Didactic portion of the Epistle the apostle treats the two great evangelical subjects of Justification and Sanctification; and, after the manner of parallelism, he discusses each of them twice (of course, in different aspects), and this in such order as to give to this part of his composition the form of an alternate parallelism. Thus, from chap. iii. 17 to chap. v. 21 (annexing chap. viii. 10–39), we have the subject of Justification doctrinally treated; and in chap. ix. x. xi. we have the same subject historically treated. On the other hand, we have Sanctification doctrinally treated in chap. vi. to chap. viii. 9, and the same subject practically treated in chap. xii. to chap. xv. 7. The whole Epistle is

thus, as to its main parts, thrown into the following parallelistic form :—

- Epistolary—Chap. i. 1-16.
- Didactic
  - Justification, Chap. i. 17 to v. 21, and viii. ver. 10–39.
  - Sanctification, Chap. vi. vii. viii. to ver. 9.
- Didactic
  - Justification, Chap. ix. x. xi.
  - Sanctification, Chap. xii. xiii. xiv. xv. to ver. 7.
- Epistolary—Chap. xv. 8 to xvi. *fin.*

EPISTOLARY PORTION, Part I.: chap. i. 1 to 16.

1. Paul,
   A servant of Jesus Christ,
   Appointed an apostle,
   Set apart to publish glad tidings from God;
2. Which he had fore-announced by his prophets,
   In the Holy Scriptures,
3. Concerning his Son,
   Of the seed of David as to his human nature,
4. Demonstrated effectually to be the Son of God as to his divine nature by his resurrection from the dead,
   Jesus Christ our Lord:
5. From whom we have received grace and apostleship,
   For submission by faith, among all the nations, for his glory;
6. Among whom ye also are called by Jesus Christ,
7. To all who are in Rome
   Beloved of God,
   Made holy,
   Grace be to you, and peace,
   From God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ.
8. In the first place, I thank my God through Jesus Christ, concerning you all,
   That your faith is celebrated through the whole world.
9. Also my witness is God,
   Whom I serve from my heart in publishing the glad tidings concerning his Son,
   That I incessantly make mention of you;
10. Always in my prayers requesting,
    If by any means at length I may be so happy, by the will of God,
    To visit you.
11. For I long to see you that I may impart to you some spiritual gift for your establishment;
12. I long to see you also that I may be jointly comforted with you by our mutual piety.
13. And I am desirous you should know, brethren, that I have often proposed to visit you,
    Although I have been hindered until now,
    That I might enjoy some pleasure among you as among converts of other nations.

14. Both to Greeks and Barbarians, both to the learned and the unlearned,
I am under obligation,
15. And I have long and earnestly desired to you also who are in Rome,
To publish the glad tidings.
16. For I am not ashamed of the glad tidings,
For it is divinely effectual to the salvation of every believer,
Of a Jew in the first instance and also of a Gentile.

The part of the Epistolary portion now before us obviously throws itself into two divisions: the former terminating at ver. 7, and constituting the Salutation; the latter commencing at ver. 8, and treating of matters personal to the apostle.

The Salutation: ver. 1–7.

The Salutation forms a single sentence, and the attentive reader will feel it to be a singularly complicated one; it will not be surprising if he should be ready to complain of it as intricate and perplexed. It may be taken to pieces, however, in such a manner as to throw light on its construction.

It is evident that ver. 1 is, in meaning, closely connected with ver. 7, all the intermediate verses being subordinate and separable. Thus—"Paul . . . to all who are in Rome . . . grace be to you." It may then be observed that the writer proceeds to designate himself in three particulars, entitling him to the confidence of the Roman converts:—

1. Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ,
Appointed an apostle,
Set apart to publish glad tidings from God.

Referring now to ver. 6, 7, we see that the writer also designates those to whom he writes by three particulars, indicating the grounds of his regard for them:—

6, 7. To all who are in Rome called by Jesus Christ,
Beloved of God,
Made holy.

And, finally, looking at the actual salutation, we find this to be thrown into parallelism, thus:—

7. Grace be to you,
And peace,
From God our Father,
And our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is an introverted parallelism, the direct meaning

being—"Grace be to you from our Lord Jesus Christ, and peace from God our Father."

These portions may now be put together in the following manner:—

1. Paul,
   A servant of Jesus Christ,
   Appointed an apostle,
   Set apart to publish glad tidings from God;
6, 7. To all who are in Rome,
   Called by Jesus Christ,
   Beloved of God,
   Made holy;
Grace be to you,
   And peace
   From God our Father,
And our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us now see in what manner the apostle diverges from the direct object of his salutation, to the subordinate but highly important topics which he has contrived to comprehend in it. The process is simply this: the apostle takes up the last word, or phrase, of the part of the sentence which he finishes, and makes it the topic of that which he begins. Thus the first part of the salutation ends with the phrase "glad tidings from God," and this is immediately taken up for amplification in two particulars, as follows:—

1, 2. Glad tidings from God,
   Which he had fore-announced by his prophets,
   In the Holy Scriptures,
Concerning his Son.

Here he makes two important statements; the first, that the "glad tidings from God" was no novelty, it having been long previously announced by the prophets; the second, that, although it was no novelty, it had received a new and grand elucidation in the recent life and death of Jesus Christ.

The apostle then takes the concluding phrase "His Son," and makes it the subject of the next part of the sentence, also in two particulars:—

3, 4. Concerning his Son—
   Of the seed of David as to his human nature,
   Demonstrated effectually to be the Son of God as to his divine nature by his resurrection from the dead—
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Interpreters have differed widely as to the meaning of this phrase—κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης, "according to the spirit of

holiness"—but I have no doubt concerning that which I have adopted. "The spirit of holiness" is, of course, a Hebraism for "the Holy Spirit;" and the lexicographers indicate various instances in which this phrase is applied to both the first and second persons as well as the third in the Divine Trinity. The true meaning is given in the translation, "according to his divine nature." The antithesis determines the reference here, I think, beyond dispute.

Nothing can be more important than the doctrine here laid down concerning the person of Christ. On the one hand, he possessed a human nature, according to which he was the Son of David; and, on the other hand, he possessed a divine nature, according to which he was the Son of God, and so was demonstrated to be by his resurrection from the dead.

Here again the concluding phrase supplies the topic which is next handled. Having spoken of Christ's "resurrection from the dead," the apostle proceeds to speak of that which as a risen Saviour he had done (ver. 5). This verse I conceive to be a parallelism constructed after the following manner:—

5. From whom
   We have received grace
     And apostleship,
   For submission by faith,
     Among all the nations,
   For his glory.

The two phrases "From whom" and "for his glory" seem to correspond, the former denoting the authority under which, and the latter denoting the end for which, Paul carried on his ministry; while the other four lines, which form an alternate parallelism, inform the Roman converts both that the writer had "received grace" to be himself a Christian, and that his apostolical office extended to "all the nations."

And, finally, having mentioned "all the nations," the apostle makes an easy and graceful transition to the Roman converts themselves:—

6. Among all the nations,
   Among whom ye also are called by Jesus Christ.

I think the sentence thus analyzed loses much of its intricacy, and all its seeming perplexity. It is evidently framed on a principle of composition, and it is put together with

perfect skill and admirable effect. The topics introduced are in the highest degree appropriate to the main subject of his letter, and they the more properly find place here, because no other part of the Epistle, as the apostle was contemplating it, would afford opportunity for their introduction.

The whole passage may now be presented in the following form:—

1. Paul,
   A servant of Jesus Christ,
   Appointed an apostle,
   Set apart to publish glad tidings from God—

   [Glad tidings from God,]
2. Which he had fore-announced by his prophets,
   In the Holy Scriptures,
3. Concerning his Son:

   [Concerning his Son,]
   Of the seed of David as to his human nature,
4. Demonstrated effectually to be the Son of God as to his divine nature, by his resurrection from the dead,
   Jesus Christ our Lord:

5. From whom
   We have received grace,
   And apostleship,
   For submission by faith,
   Among all the nations,
   For his glory:

6. [Among all the nations,]
   Among whom ye also are called by Jesus Christ;

7. To all who are in Rome,
   [Called by Jesus Christ]
   Beloved by God,
   Made holy;

Grace be to you,
And peace,
From God our Father,
And our Lord Jesus Christ.

I beg the reader to observe here the very peculiar manner in which the phrase—"concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord"—is divided by the apostle, the former part of it being placed at the beginning of ver. 3 and the latter part of it at the end of ver. 4; evidently for the purpose of throwing in the matter which intervenes between them.

Observe also the artifice by which ver. 6 is detached from the place in ver. 7 to which it strictly belongs, as the first of

the three characteristics of the Romans to whom he was writing, and linked with ver. 5, with one line of which it forms a most appropriate parallelism:—

6. Among all the nations—
Among whom ye also are called by Jesus Christ.

Personal Topics: ver. 8 to 18.

After the salutation the apostle introduces a variety of personal topics, his notice of which extends to the 16th verse.

The construction of this passage is very simple. In ver. 8 the apostle says that he gave thanks for them, and in ver. 9 that he prayed for them; in ver. 10 specifying one particular object of his prayer, namely, that he might be providentially permitted to visit them, and in ver. 11, 12, assigning his reasons for this prayer. In ver. 13, Paul continues the same subject, where the phrase—*οὐ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν*, "I do not wish you to be ignorant"—seems to amount to this, "I am particularly desirous you should know;" and the emphasis to be laid on this phrase accounts for the double mention of the subject, and the partial repetition of his thoughts. In the following verses he assigns as a further reason for his long-cherished wish to visit Rome, that, as he was under obligation by his apostolical mission to nations of all classes, so he was earnestly desirous—for this is the force of *πρόθυμον*—to preach the Gospel at the imperial city. His declaration "I am not ashamed of the glad tidings" may be taken in the stronger sense of glorying in it, according to Gal. vi. 14.

In this portion of the passage there is a minute attention to the rules of parallelism which is worthy of observation. Ver. 8, 9, and 10, as exhibited below, are severally complete parallelisms, of a form in which the first and fourth lines are immediately connected and treat the principal subject, while a pair of subordinate topics are thrown in between them:—

8. In the first place, I thank my God,
Through Jesus Christ,
Concerning you all,
That your piety is celebrated through the whole world.

9. Also my witness is God,
Whom I serve from my heart
In publishing the glad tidings concerning his Son,
That I incessantly make mention of you;

10. Always in my prayers requesting,
If by any means at length I may be so happy,
By the will of God,
To visit you.

Ver. 11, 12 exhibit an alternate parallelism. Here I have taken τοῦτο δέ ἐστιν, at the beginning of ver. 12—literally "that is"—as equivalent to a repetition of the apostle's desire to visit the Roman converts, and as introducing his second reason for that desire:—

11. For I long to see you,
That I may impart to you some spiritual gift for your establishment.
12. I long to see you also,
That I may be jointly comforted with you by our mutual piety.

Ver. 13 is a parallelism of three lines, a form of rare occurrence, the middle line having the character of a parenthesis:—

13. And I am desirous you should know, brethren, that I have often proposed to visit you,
Although I have been hindered until now,
That I might enjoy some pleasure among you as among converts of other nations.

In ver. 14–16 the construction is complex. The principal idea is expressed thus:—

14. Both to Greeks and Barbarians,
Both to the learned and the unlearned,
I am under obligation to publish the glad tidings.

The apostle, however, has a subordinate idea also to convey, which he does in the following terms:—

15. And I have long and earnestly desired
To you also who are in Rome
To publish the glad tidings;
16. For I am not ashamed of the glad tidings,
For it is divinely efficacious to the salvation of every believer,
Of a Jew in the first instance and also of a Gentile.

The apostle in a singular manner links these two ideas together, by breaking in upon the last line of the first parallelism, and inserting the first part of his second parallelism there, so as to make the phrase "to publish the glad tidings" serve for both. The entire sentence requires to be arranged as follows:—

14. Both to Greeks and Barbarians,
Both to the learned and the unlearned,
I am under obligation—
15. And I have long and earnestly desired
To you also who are in Rome,
To publish the glad tidings.
For I am not ashamed of the glad tidings;
For it is divinely efficacious to the salvation of every believer,
Of a Jew in the first instance, and also of a Gentile.

The reader will see that the apostle's glorying in the glad tidings was not the reason why he was under obligation to publish them to persons of all classes; it was the reason why he had been long and earnestly desirous to publish them at Rome.

Didactic Portion, Part I.: chap. i. 17 to viii. *fin.*

I have already observed that in this portion of the Epistle the apostle treats the two subjects of Justification and Sanctification. I shall take them up in their order.

Section 1. *Of Justification:* chap. i. 17 to v. 21, and viii. 10–39.

The apostle commences his treatment of this subject by a brief but most appropriate announcement of the fact that a method of justification is revealed, ver. 17. He then argues man's need of justification from chap. i. 18 to iii. 19. The method of justification is opened in chap. iii. 20 to iv. *fin.*, and v. 12 to 21; and the privileges of justification are exhibited in chap. v. 1–11, and viii. 10–39.

Justification announced: ver. 17.

17. For a divine method of justification by it is revealed,
Through faith, for faith:
As it is written—
The righteous shall live through his faith.

This verse requires close attention. In it occurs for the first time in this Epistle the phrase δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ—literally "righteousness of God;" a phrase of frequent recurrence in the apostle's argument, and of great importance in it. It is, of course, very desirable to arrive at a correct understanding of it; and, of course also, opinions widely differ. That

which I have given—"a divine method of justification"—is the sense which best satisfies me. The only objection of seeming force to this rendering is that the apostle then uses the word in a new sense. This is no doubt true, but I see no force in it as an objection. In the complex progress of human thought and language there must often have been, not only the introduction into language of new words, but the using of words in new senses; and if Paul here uses a word in a sense in which no writer had used it before him, he did, not only what was very convenient to himself, but what, in fact, had been done a thousand times before, and has been done a thousand times since. The only real question is does the exigency of the passage in which it occurs require it? That the apostle does actually use the word δικαιοσύνη in the sense of a method of justification is evident from chap. x. 3, where it seems incapable of any other signification; there can be no objection, therefore, to a similar employment of it here, if—as in my judgment it does—it best suits the connexion.

With respect to the verse as a whole, its meaning will be best arrived at by throwing the former part of it into an alternate parallelism, in the following manner:—

17. For a divine method of justification
By it is revealed,
Through faith,
For faith.

Putting this alternate parallelism into a direct form, it reads thus—"For by it a divine method of justification through faith is revealed for faith." All the best critics agree that this is, and must be, the meaning of the place; but I do not know any method in which this meaning is brought out without violence, except this of arrangement by parallelism.

The fact thus stated, that in the glad tidings "a divine method of justification through faith is revealed for faith," is used by the apostle as a proof that it effects the salvation of every one who believes (ver. 16), or exercises the faith on which its efficacy is made to depend; and the argument seems to be perfectly conclusive. He proceeds to confirm it, however, by a reference to Old Testament Scripture, in the words,

As it is written, The just shall live through his faith.

Much difference of opinion has existed as to the interpretation of these words, and much plausibility attaches to the emendation proposed by reading them, "The righteous through faith shall live." This arrangement of the words, however, is without critical warrant, while an examination of the connexion in which they are found affords a decisive argument for taking them as they stand. They occur in Habakkuk ii. 4, where the whole verse reads thus: "Behold, his soul which is lifted up in him is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith." And the following is Doddridge's note upon it:—

"The prophet Habakkuk, speaking of the destruction to come upon Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, observes how different the behaviour and states of good and bad men would be. The *sinner's heart would be vainly lifted up* to his destruction, while trusting in his own wisdom and power—and accordingly prince and people became the sacrifices of this foolish self-confidence; whereas the *righteous*, the truly good man, would preserve his life by *believing* the divine declarations, and acting according to them. Thus, under the Gospel, he that believes shall live."*

It appears, then, that the case in the contemplation of the prophet was not one of believing merely, but of believing practical directions in such a manner as to act upon them; and the design of the quotation seems to be to intimate that a saving belief of the Gospel must be of a similar kind. The believer, the apostle teaches, shall be saved by his faith, if it lead him to accept and embrace the method in which salvation is provided. The idea was evidently present to his mind that the belief of the Gospel was separable from the acceptance of it, and to guard against error in this respect was his object.

Man's need of Justification: chap. i. 18 to iii. 19.

I. 18. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against the universal impiety and injustice of men;
Who combine the knowledge of the true God with iniquity.
19. Because what is knowable of God is manifested to them,
For God hath made it manifest to them.
20. For his invisible attributes,
Since the creation of the world,
Being discerned by the things that are created,

* Family Expositor, *in loc.*

Have been clearly discoverable,
Even his eternal power and Godhead;
So that they are inexcusable.
21. Because, knowing God, not as God did they worship, or thank him,
But they became absurd in their conceptions of him,
And their inconsiderate mind was darkened.
22. Those who boasted of their wisdom were infatuated;
23. And dishonoured the glorious incorruptible God by worshipping a likeness and image of corruptible man,
And images of birds, and of quadrupeds, and of reptiles.
24. Wherefore God abandoned them, through their own lasciviousness, to uncleanness,
Mutually to dishonour their own persons.
25. They superseded the true God by pretended ones,
And worshipped and served the creature instead of the Creator,
Who is blessed for ever. Amen.
26. On this account God abandoned them to infamous passions.
For women changed the natural use into one unnatural;
27. And, in like manner, men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned with desire one towards another:
Men with men perpetrating the shame,
And each receiving the due recompense of his fault.
28. And as they did not choose to retain God in their recollection,
God abandoned them to their perverse tendency to do evil.
29. They abounded in all forms of wickedness—injury, covetousness, maliciousness:
They were full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity;
30. They were whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, insolent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil:
31. They were without obedience to parents, without consideration, without fidelity, without natural affection, without compassion.
32. Having known the sentence of God that those who do such things are worthy of punishment,
They not only do them, but are complacent in those who do them.
II. 1. Therefore thou also art inexcusable, O man, whoever accuseth;
For wherein thou accusest another thou condemnest thyself,
For thou who accusest doest the same things.
2. Now we know that the sentence of God is just against those who do such things.
3. Thinkest thou this, then, O accuser of those who do such things yet doing the same, that thou wilt escape the judgment of God?
4. Or dost thou despise his rich kindness, and patience, and long-suffering,
Not considering that the kindness of God leadeth thee to repentance;
5. And by thy obduracy and inconsiderate disposition treasure up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath,
And revelation of the judicial righteousness of God?

6. He will render to every man according to his works—
7. To those, on the one hand, who by perseverance in well-doing seek for immortal glory and honour,
Eternal happiness;
8. To those, on the other, who are rebellious and resist the truth, living unrighteously,
Indignation and wrath:
9. Tribulation and anguish to every human being whose works are evil,
To a Jew first and also to a Gentile;
10. But glory, honour, and joy, to every one whose works are good,
To a Jew first and also to a Gentile;
11. For there is no partiality with God.
12. For those who have sinned without a revealed law will not suffer its penalties,
And those who have sinned under revealed law will be judged according to it.
13. For not hearers of the law are righteous before God,
But doers of the law will be accounted righteous.
14. For when nations who have not a revealed law instinctively do things prescribed by the law,
They, not having a law, are a law to themselves;
15. It being manifest that the law is practically written in their hearts,
Their consciences also witnessing, and their reflections alternately condemning and excusing them.
16. In the day when God will judge the secret works of men
By Jesus Christ,
According to the glad tidings which I publish.
17. Behold, thou art by birth a Jew, and reliest on revelation,
18. And gloriest in God, and knowest his will,
And discernest what is more excellent, being instructed by revelation,
19. And art confident that thou art a guide of the blind, a light of
20. those who are in darkness, an instructor of the ignorant, a teacher of babes,
Since thou hast the certain knowledge of truth by revelation.
21. Thou, therefore, who art able to teach another, teachest thou not thyself?
Thou who enjoinest not to steal, dost thou steal?
22. Thou who enjoinest not to commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery?
Thou who abhorrest idols, dost thou profane the temple?
23. Thou who gloriest in the law, by breaking the law dost thou dishonour God?
24. For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you,
As it is written.
25. Thy state as circumcised is privileged if thou fulfil the law,
But, since thou art a breaker of the law, thou art as if uncircumcised.
26. If, therefore, an uncircumcised person keep the precepts of the law,

Shall not he be regarded as if he were circumcised?
27. For he, by birth uncircumcised yet keeping the law, condemneth
Thee, although scripturally instructed and circumcised, as a breaker of the law.
28. For not he who is so externally only is a Jew,
Nor is that which is outward and corporeal only circumcision;
29. But he who is so internally is a Jew,
And circumcision is a change of the heart.
These have a spiritual, as well as a literal meaning;
And the privilege is not human, but divine.
III. 1. What, then, is the pre-eminence of a Jew?
Or what is the advantage of his circumcision?
2. Much in many respects:
Principally, however, that to the Jews were given the promises of God.
3. But what since some of them disbelieved the promises?
Will not their unbelief frustrate the promises of God?
4. By no means:
For God will be faithful, though every man be false:
As it is written: Thou wilt be justified in thy decisions,
And irreproachable in thy judgments.
5. But if our unbelief display the faithfulness of God,
(What am I saying?)
Is not God unjust in inflicting punishment?
(I speak as an objector.)
6. By no means:
In that case how shall God judge the world?
7. For if the veracity of God hath by my fault become more conspicuous,
Why notwithstanding am I punished as a sinner?
8. And why may we not say—
(As we are misrepresented,
And as some affirm that we teach),
Let us do evil because good will ensue from it?
Their punishment is just.
9. What, however, is our conclusion?
Have we any religious prerogative?
None whatever.
10. For we have already proved that all, both Jews and Gentiles, are sinful.
As it is written—There is not a righteous person,
There is not even one.
11. There is not one who understandeth,
There is not one who seeketh after God.
12. All have gone out of the right way,
Together they have become perverse;
There is none who worketh righteousness,
There is not so much as one.
13. Their throat is an open sepulchre,
They have deceived with their tongues;
The poison of asps is within their lips,

14. Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.
15. Their feet are swift to shed blood,
16. Destruction and misery are in their ways.
17. Also the way of peace they have not known;
18. There is no fear of God before their eyes.
19. Now we know that what the Scripture thus saith it saith concerning those who are instructed by it:
So that every person must be put to silence,
And the whole world be acknowledged guilty before God.

The apostle's treatment of this subject divides itself into two parts; the former being a statement of the general principles of God's moral government, and the latter an exhibition of the practical condition of mankind, the Gentile and the Jew. The passages which treat of these subjects are not placed in immediate contact, but are interlaced with each other in highly artistic parallelism.

The Moral Government of God: chap. i. 18; ii. 6–16.

The passages which relate to this subject are found in chap. i. 18, and in chap. ii. 6–16; placed together they stand compactly as follows:—

I. 18. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against the universal impiety and injustice of men,
Who combine the knowledge of the true God with iniquity.
II. 6. He will render to every one according to his works—
7. To those, on the one hand, who by perseverance in well-doing seek for immortal glory and honour,
Eternal happiness;
8. To those, on the other, who are rebellious, and resist the truth, living unrighteously,
Indignation and wrath:
9. Tribulation and anguish to every human being whose works are evil,
To a Jew first and also to a Gentile;
10. But glory, honour, and joy to every one whose works are good,
To a Jew first and also to a Gentile:
11. For there is no partiality with God.
12. For those who have sinned without revealed law will not suffer its penalties,
And those who have sinned under revealed law will be judged according to it.
13. For not hearers of the law are righteous before God,
But doers of the law will be accounted righteous.
14. For when nations who have not a revealed law instinctively do things prescribed by the law,
These, not having a law, are a law to themselves;

15. It being manifest that the law is practically written in their hearts,
Their consciences also witnessing, and their reflections alternately condemning and excusing them.
16. In the day when God will judge the secret works of men,
By Jesus Christ,
According to the glad tidings which I publish.

On an attentive examination of this passage as a whole, it is evident that the apostle treats the moral government of God under two aspects; on the one hand he lays down its universal principles, and on the other he deals with two apparently exceptional cases. These cases being treated in chap. iii. 9–15, the remainder of the passage is devoted to universal principles.

The general principles of God's Moral Government: chap. i. 18; ii. 6–8 and 16.

The apostle commences with a solemn declaration of the exposure of mankind to the wrath of God.

I. 18. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against the universal impiety and injustice of men,
Who combine the knowledge of the true God with iniquity.

There is no apparent link of connection between this statement and that which precedes it, namely, that in the Gospel is revealed a divine method of justification; there is, however, a real one, and it is to be found in this idea, that justification is in other words deliverance from wrath, so that, in order to demonstrate the need of justification, a state of exposure to wrath must be shown.

The force of this verse will be best brought out by proposing some questions, and eliciting from the apostle's language his answers to them.

"The wrath of God," he tells us, "is revealed." We ask, against what? And he replies, "against the universal impiety and injustice of men."

These words have an important negative as well as positive aspect. Some divines teach that the wrath of God is revealed against men as having sinned in Adam; not so Paul—his language is confined to actual transgressions. I am aware of his words in chap. v. 12 *seq.*, and I shall hereafter have an opportunity of fully discussing them; at present I say only

this, that, occurring, as they do, so long after the apostle has completed his account of the ruined condition of mankind, they cannot with any justice be considered as forming a part of it. Had they done so, they should clearly have constituted its first item.

Positively, the wrath of God is revealed "against the impiety and injustice of men;" that is, against their offences towards God and one another. We ask, however, why? Has there been anything in "the impiety and injustice of men" to deserve the wrath of God? To this question the apostle answers explicitly that there has been so; and he assigns this reason, that men have "combined the knowledge of the true God with iniquity."

The single word ἀλήθεια, "truth," I have here rendered by the more expanded phrase "the knowledge of the true God;" since the following context shows that this was the idea in the apostle's mind.

Some have understood the verb here employed, κατέχω, "hold," of holding back, or restraining; and so have applied the entire sentence to those persons only who, more or less enlightened, culpably suppressed their knowledge. It seems to me, however, that the sentence must have an application to mankind at large; and so understood, it implies, of course, that all classes of mankind have always had either knowledge, or means of knowledge, sufficient to make their "impiety and injustice" culpable.

In the remaining part of the passage the apostle defines, in grand and noble outline, the leading features of the divine government. He has already said that mankind are under divine wrath for sin; to this he now adds that the wrath of God proceeds from no personal resentment of the dishonour done to him, but that it is the issue of a system of responsibility and retribution which he has been pleased to establish. I lay emphasis on these words—*which he has been pleased to establish*—because I wish to express as strongly as possible my conviction that this is neither the necessary nor the natural condition of mankind, but rather a divine constitution founded upon it, and materially modifying it. The *natural* relation of the Creator to rational creatures may be said to resemble the parental relation as it exists among men; but the elements of responsibility and retribution evidently belong to a judicial system. That God as Creator,

and therefore possessing absolute sovereignty, was entitled to institute such a system, only observing in it unimpeachable equity, cannot be doubted; and it is evident that the system here developed is even much more than equitable, since it proposed to reward a full employment of man's power by "immortal glory and honour," or—in different words only—by "eternal happiness." On the other hand, punishment cannot be inequitable as declared against those "who are rebellious, and resist the truth."

II. 6. He will render to every one according to his works:
7. To those, on the one hand, who by perseverance in well-doing seek for immortal glory and honour,
Eternal happiness;
8. To those, on the other, who are rebellious, and resist the truth, living unrighteously,
Indignation and wrath.

This, then, is God's instituted method of dealing with mankind. He surrounds them with manifestations of himself, sufficient, if observed, to lead them to "glorify him as God;" and for their improvement of these manifestations he holds them responsible, under conditions of equitable punishment for neglect and large reward for fidelity: and out of this system springs the wrath which "is revealed from heaven against the universal impiety and injustice of men."

As this is the first instance in which the phrase ζωὴ αἰώνιος, "eternal life," occurs, I say once for all that I reject the literal and usual translation, "eternal life," and that I shall uniformly render it "eternal happiness," believing this to be its true meaning in this connexion. As a critical authority for this course it will be sufficient to refer to Schleusner's Lexicon, under the word ζωή.

Exceptional Cases—Jew and Gentile: chap. ii. 9–15.

From the all-comprehensive scheme of moral government which the apostle had laid down two cases of apparent exemption might be alleged, the one on behalf of the Jew, the other on behalf of the Gentile. These cases rested on different grounds. On behalf of the Jew it might be asked whether he had not too high a standing in God's favour to be so severely punished under any circumstances; and on behalf of the Gentile, whether he really had sufficient know-

ledge of the system to make it fairly applicable to him. These cases the apostle proceeds to treat in ver. 9–15.

II. 6. God will render to every man according to his works—
9. Tribulation and anguish to every human being whose works are evil,
To a Jew first and also to a Gentile;
10. But glory, honour, and joy to every one whose works are good,
To a Jew first and also to a Gentile:
11. For there is no partiality with God.
12. For those who have sinned without a revealed law will not suffer its penalties,
And those who have sinned under revealed law will be judged according to it.
13. For not hearers of the law are righteous before God,
But doers of the law will be accounted righteous.
14. For when nations who have not a revealed law instinctively do things prescribed by the law,
They, not having a law, are a law to themselves,
15. It being manifest that the law is practically written in their hearts.
Their consciences also witnessing, and their reflections alternately condemning and excusing them.
16. In the day when God will judge the secret works of men.

I have introduced this passage with a line from ver. 6, and terminated it with one from ver. 16, in order to make manifest the completeness of its artistic structure. When ver. 6 is closely examined, two ideas—a principal and a subordinate one—appear in it. Here is the principal:—

God will render *to men* according to their works.

Here is the subordinate:—

God will render *to every man* according to his works.

And, in point of fact, the apostle takes up these two ideas in succession, by means of what seems at first to be a mere repetition of ver. 7 and 8 in ver. 9 and 10. The former is fully brought out in the following parallelism:—

II. 6. God will render to men according to their works—
7. To those, on the one hand, who by perseverance in well-doing seek immortal glory and honour,
Eternal happiness;
8. To those, on the other, who are rebellious, and resist the truth, living unrighteously,
Indignation and wrath:
16. In the day when God will judge the secret works of men.

The latter is then treated in the following connected parallelism:—

6. God will render to every man according to his works—
9. Tribulation and anguish to every human being whose works are evil,
To a Jew first and also to a Gentile;
10. But glory, honour, and joy to every one whose works are good,
To a Jew first and also to a Gentile:
11. For there is no partiality with God.

It may be observed here that the second parallelism differs from the first in two respects: 1, the classes are taken up in an inverse order, the first being good and evil, the second evil and good; an artistic arrangement by which the impression of good conduct and reward is left the most strongly on the mind. 2, The retributive element is placed differently—in the first it is at the close of the sentence, in the second it is at the beginning of it; so making room for the phrase—"To a Jew first and also to a Gentile"—without encumbering the construction.

Before passing away from this passage a moment's notice may be taken of the phraseology employed by the apostle. It is remarkable that, although he uses four different terms to denote the punishment of iniquity, he does not use the word, *θάνατος*, *death:* his terms are *ὀργὴ*, *θυμὸς*, *θλῖψις*, *στενωχωρία*. These, indeed, constitute the fit antithesis of "glory, honour, and joy," and these again are the undoubted elements of "eternal happiness." The apostle speaks, indeed, of men seeking "glory, honour, and *immortality;*" but critics are agreed in explaining this of immortal happiness, nor could it well be otherwise under a system which knew nothing of death.

Having laid down his general principle that divine retribution will be made alike to Jew and Gentile, the apostle further prosecutes his argument in ver. 12.

II. 6. God will render to every one according to his works;
11. For there is no partiality with God.
12. Those who have sinned without revealed law will not suffer its penalties;
And those who have sinned under revealed law will be judged according to it.

This sentence is to be regarded in the light of a qualification of the apostle's main position. While all will be dealt

with irrespectively of national distinctions, equitable regard will be had to the diversity of their privileges. And the two cases are immediately taken up in detail, in succession but in inverse order. The Jew is first dealt with.

II. 13. For not hearers of the law are righteous before God,
But doers of the law will be accounted righteous.

In these words there is this implied, that the Jews, while they were privileged to have a law, had not kept it; and consequently, on the principle that not hearers but doers of the law will be accounted righteous, they are exposed to wrath.

The case of the Gentiles is then treated in the following passage:—

II. 14. When nations who have not a revealed law instinctively do things prescribed by the law,
They, not having a law, are a law unto themselves,
15. It being manifest that the law is practically written in their hearts.
Their consciences also witnessing, and their reflections alternately condemning and excusing them.

I have arranged this as an introverted parallelism, since the facts of human nature adduced in the first and last lines of it combine to support the conclusion drawn in the second and third.

Concerning the Gentiles the apostle here argues that for practical purposes they had a law, the law being "written in their hearts," a position which he supports by adducing facts in human nature. The first is that all men feel impulses to right action. This I take to be the force of the phrase, *ποιῶσιν φύσει*, "do by nature;" since the fact that *some* pagans did *some* right actions will hardly make it good in a more literal sense, especially in the face of the apostle's description in the first chapter. The second is that all men experience workings of mind in relation to actions wrought, as shown by the testimony of the conscience and by the varying character of subsequent reflection.

After he has thus treated the whole of the matter in his hands, the apostle brings forward the concluding thought of his complex sentence, which has been kept in abeyance until all the matters subordinate to the general subject have been disposed of.

II. 6. God will render to every man according to his works,
16. In the day when he will judge the secret works of men
By Jesus Christ,
According to the glad tidings which I publish.

Here the apostle answers a very natural and obvious question: If God means to render to every man according to his works, when and how is this to be done? Obviously it is not done *now*. No, says Paul, but it will be done hereafter; and it will be done in a mode which will bring to light all the necessary elements of judgment—"in the day when God shall judge the secret works of men."

There is something very remarkable, and very interesting, in the brief appendage which the apostle attaches to his argument, now apparently so complete. He goes far from his immediate subject to announce that God will judge men "by Jesus Christ." One is ready to ask at the first moment how this can be; seeing that the scheme of retributive government is necessarily antecedent to human guilt, and consequently to human redemption. How can a person of whom it knows nothing preside at its consummating judgment?

To solve this seeming mystery, it is to be recollected that another and a succeeding dispensation of the divine government of man is also to have its day of judgment: it becomes possible, therefore, that Christ, who is fitly appointed by the Father to be judge on the latter occasion, may be constituted judge on the former occasion also; since to the dispensation of moral law is superadded the dispensation of redeeming mercy, and both, being based on a common principle, will be consummated together. The apostle announces this appointment as a part of the glad tidings which he made known.

The Moral Condition of Mankind: chap. i. 19 *fin.;* ii. 1–5, and 17 *fin.;* iii. 1–20.

Having thus exhibited the moral government of God, the apostle now turns to the moral condition of mankind; first of the Gentiles, then of the Jews.

The Moral Condition of the Gentiles: chap. i. 19 *fin.*

In treating the moral condition of the Gentiles, the apostle starts from the declaration he has just made, that "the wrath

of God is revealed from heaven" against them; and he proceeds to prove the justice of this by two connected arguments, which (from ver. 19 and 21) may be thus placed together:—

I. 19. Because what is knowable of God is manifest to them:
21. Because, knowing God, not as God did they worship or thank him.

These topics are then separately handled. The first is thus opened in ver. 19:—

I. 19. What is knowable of God is manifested to them,
For God hath made it manifest to them.

Man's knowledge of God, therefore, is neither innate, nor intuitive, nor speculative; it is inductive, derived by convincing inference from his works. This is stated more fully in the passage which follows, and which arranges itself as an introverted parallelism:—

I. 19. God hath made it manifest to them—
20. For his invisible attributes
Since the creation of the world,
Being discerned by the things which are created,
Have been clearly discoverable,
Even his eternal power and Godhead.
So that they are inexcusable.

In this arrangement the close connexion between the first and last lines is obvious. In arranging the five lines within these, I have altered the position of the phrase "Have been clearly discoverable," not arbitrarily, but in strict accordance with the original. That this transposition subserves the parallelism is true, but this only shows that the parallelism was intended by the writer. These lines, put into a direct form, read thus: "For his invisible attributes, even his eternal power and Godhead, since the creation of the world have been clearly discoverable, being discerned by the things which are created."

The apostle having thus made good his ground that mankind have always possessed the knowledge of God, the question remains whether they have really combined it with a course of impiety. To this he answers in ver. 21.

I. 21. Knowing God, not as God did they worship or thank him.

This part of the apostle's argument is now complete; and

in order to afford the reader a general view of it, I place it before his eyes in the following form :—

I. 18. For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against the universal impiety and injustice of men,
Who combine the knowledge of the true God with iniquity.
19. Because what is knowable of God is manifested to them,
For God hath made it manifest to them—
20. For his invisible attributes,
Since the creation of the world,
Being discerned by the things which are created,
Have been clearly discoverable,
Even his eternal power and Godhead.
So that they are inexcusable;
21. Because, knowing God, not as God they worshipped or thanked him.

The argument in this beautifully-constructed passage is too lucid to require illustration.

The remaining part of this chapter is devoted to a development of the progress of human wickedness, in the two streams of it which issued from their common fountain, the neglect of God. The first of these is idolatry, the second immorality.

The subject of idolatry is treated in ver. 21, 22, 23, and 25; and it may be sufficient for me to present these verses to the reader in the following form:—

I. 21. Knowing God, not as God did they worship or thank him;
But they became absurd in their conceptions of him,
And their inconsiderate heart was darkened.
22. Those who boasted of their wisdom were infatuated,
23. And dishonoured the glorious incorruptible God by worshipping a likeness and image of corruptible man,
And images of birds, and of quadrupeds, and of reptiles.
25. They superseded the true God by pretended ones,
And so worshipped and served the creature instead of the Creator,
Who is blessed for ever. Amen.

The subject of human profligacy is treated in the remaining verses of the chapter.

In ver. 28 the apostle says: "And even as they did not choose to retain God in their recollection, God *abandoned* them to a perverse disposition;" and a similar phrase is used in ver. 24 and 26. In the interpretation of this phrase our choice lies between two alternatives. We must understand it of an influence either internal or external. Either God withdrew some salutary influence previously exerted on the

minds of men; or he declined to make any addition to their means of knowledge. I can have no hesitation in adopting the latter of these views.

The sad fact of human guilt and ill desert is thus fully made out, and the apostle concludes his catalogue of crimes, which contemporary profane history shows to be but too truly charged on the age in which he lived, with affirming that they were wrought "knowing the sentence of God that those who committed such things were worthy of punishment," ver. 32.

Against this "universal impiety and injustice of men," the apostle has told us "the wrath of God was revealed from heaven." How, then, was this revelation made?

His reference on this point cannot, of course, be to revelation strictly so called, since it must be something common to all men. It can be only to the voice of natural conscience, or the dictates of man's moral nature, which constitute the voice of God within him, and which may therefore be said to reveal, or to announce, his wrath "from heaven."

The Moral Condition of the Jews: chap. ii. 1, 2–5, 17 *fin.;* iii. 1–19.

To a certain point the apostle has now completed his argument; he has laid down the great principle of God's moral government, asserted its comprehension of Jew and Gentile, and demonstrated the justice of the condemnation of the Gentiles. What he has yet to do is to demonstrate in a similar manner the just condemnation of the Jews, and to argue out the true nature of their position as a favoured people. To the former of these he now proceeds.

Their Guilt and its aggravations: chap. ii. 1 and 24; iii. 10–19; ii. 17–23, and ii. 2–5.

We do not find the apostle's treatment of this subject in any single passage. He refers to it in four several places, and these taken together constitute a complete demonstration, with its appropriate appeal; but in order to bring them together some freedom must be used with the Epistle as it lies before us, a freedom which, if, on the first glance, it should seem excessive, I hope its illustrative value will ultimately justify.

The passages which I thus place together are the following: chap. ii. 1 and 24; iii. 10–19; ii. 17–23; and ii. 2–5. As thus placed in connexion, the whole reads as follows:—

II. 1. Therefore thou also art inexcusable, O man, whoever accuseth,
For wherein thou accusest another thou condemnest thyself;
For thou who accusest another doest the same things.
24. For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you,
As it is written:
III. 10. There is not a righteous person,
There is not even one.
11. There is not one who understandeth,
There is not one who seeketh after God.
12. All men have gone out of the right way,
Together they have become perverse.
There is none who worketh righteousness,
There is not so much as one.
13. Their throat is an open sepulchre,
They have deceived with their tongues;
The poison of asps is within their lips,
14. Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.
15. Their feet are swift to shed blood,
16. Destruction and misery lurk in their ways.
17. Also the way of peace they have not known,
18. There is no fear of God before their eyes.
19. Now we know that what the Scripture thus saith it saith concerning those who are instructed by it.
II. 17. Behold, thou art by birth a Jew, and relicst on revelation,
18. And gloriest in the true God, and knowest his will,
And discernest what is more excellent, being instructed by revelation,
19. And art confident that thou art a guide of the blind, a light
20. of those who are in darkness, an instructor of the ignorant, a teacher of babes,
Since thou hast the certain knowledge of truth by revelation:
21. Thou, therefore, who art able to teach another, teachest thou not thyself?
Thou who enjoinest not to steal, dost thou steal?
22. Thou who enjoinest not to commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery?
Thou who abhorrest idols, dost thou profane the temple?
23. Thou who gloriest in the law, through breaking the law dost thou dishonour God?
II. 2. Now we know that the sentence of God is certain against those who commit such things.
3. Thinkest thou this, then, O accuser of those who do such things, yet doing the same, that thou wilt escape the judgment of God?
4. Or dost thou despise his rich kindness, and patience, and long-suffering,
Not considering that the kindness of God leadeth thee to repentance;

5. And by thy obduracy and inconsiderate disposition treasure up to thyself wrath
Against the day of wrath, and revelation of the judicial righteousness of God?

These passages evidently relate, all of them, to the subject in hand, the moral condition of the Jews; and whatever difficulty there may be in tracing the causes which so singularly dispersed them in the apostle's composition, there is clearly no injustice done to the matter of them, but the contrary, in thus placing them together.

In the introduction of his subject the apostle makes a transition of a very remarkable kind. It is not, as his transitions often are, easy and graceful, but abrupt and vehement.

II. 1. Therefore thou also art inexcusable, O man, whoever accuseth,
For wherein thou accusest another thou condemnest thyself;
For thou who accusest another doest the same things.

The reader is taken by surprise by this sudden diversion and eagerness, and asks the reason of it. The case, however, is this. Paul seems to have imagined—to have almost *heard*—some one saying, in reply to his description of human wickedness and misery, "This is no doubt true of the greater part of the world, but surely not of all. Is there not a nation standing high in God's favour? Are the Jews under his wrath as well as the Gentiles?" It is to this latent question that the apostle's outburst is a reply; and the vividness and force of his imagination have evidently broken in upon the direct course of his argument. It is true that this verse relates to the moral condition of the Jews, the topic apparently next in order to that of the Gentiles; the apostle is not yet ready for it, however, the regular treatment of it being postponed, while other important matter is introduced.

In tracing the construction we begin with the first verse of chap. ii., which stands in connexion, not with ver. 2, but with ver. 24, thus:—

II. 1. Therefore thou also art inexcusable, O man, whoever accuseth,
For wherein thou accusest another thou condemnest thyself;
For thou who accusest another doest the same things.
24. For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.

After this the apostle immediately adds "As it is written;" a phrase certainly giving occasion to no little difficulty. To

what is it to be applied? If we say to the sentence immediately preceding, then it is to be replied that there is no place in all the Bible where this "is written," or anything like it. The result is the same if we refer to the sentence following. We are consequently driven to the conclusion that it must refer to something else—to some passage or passages probably which the apostle was going to quote, but from the actual quotation of which something in the course of his thoughts at the moment turned him aside. If this conjecture is correct, we shall in some other place find the passages in question. Now the missing passages are actually to be found in the third chapter, as follows:—

III. 9. What, then? Have we any religious prerogative?
None whatever.
10. For we have already proved that all, both Jews and Gentiles, are sinful;
As it is written—
There is not a righteous person,
There is not even one.
11. There is not one who understandeth,
There is not one who seeketh after God:
12. All have gone out of the right way,
Together they have become perverse,
There is none who worketh righteousness,
There is not so much as one.
13. Their throat is an open sepulchre,
They have deceived with their tongues;
The poison of asps is within their lips,
14. Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.
15. Their feet are swift to shed blood,
16. Destruction and misery lurk in their ways.
17. Also the way of peace they have not known;
18. There is no fear of God before their eyes.
19. Now we know that what the Scripture thus saith it saith concerning those who are instructed by it.
So that every person must be put to silence,
And the whole world be acknowledged guilty before God.

On looking closely at this passage two things become evident. The first is that the beginning and the end of it are closely connected, thus:—

9. What, then? Have we any religious prerogative?
None whatever.
For we have already proved that all, both Jews and Gentiles, are sinful.
19. So that every person must be put to silence,
And the whole world be acknowledged guilty before God.

In the next place it is evident that all between these two clauses is irrelevant, since it consists of quotations from the Old Testament tending to prove, not what he now asserts, but what the apostle says he has "already proved." In truth, they are the very passages wanting at chap. ii. 24; and they ought in the due course of the argument to be placed there, thus:—

II. 1. But thou also art inexcusable, O man, whoever accuseth,
For wherein thou accusest another thou condemnest thyself,
For thou that accusest another doest the same things.
24. For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you:
III. 10. As it is written:
There is not a righteous person,
There is not even one.
11. There is not one who understandeth,
There is not one who seeketh after God.
12. All have gone out of the right way,
Together they have become perverse;
There is none who worketh righteousness,
There is not so much as one.
13. Their throat is an open sepulchre;
They have deceived with their tongues;
The poison of asps is within their lips;
14. Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.
15. Their feet are swift to shed blood;
16. Destruction and misery lurk in their ways.
17. Also the way of peace they have not known;
18. There is no fear of God before their eyes.
19. Now we know that whatsoever things the Scripture thus saith it saith respecting those who are instructed by it.

There is something very remarkable about this passage, and highly worthy of observation. It reads like a single quotation from the Psalms or some other poetical portion of the Old Testament, but it is no such thing. On the contrary, it consists of a great variety of passages, first cited from a great variety of places and connexions, and then combined into a poetic form, with a degree of pains and skill which shows the apostle to have been well acquainted both with the theory and practice of parallelistic art.

The apostle's demonstration is now complete; since the Scriptures which he has quoted from the Old Testament must, of course (as he says), refer to the Jews, and he has already exhibited the iniquity of the Gentiles. He does not dismiss the Jew, however, with a simple demonstration of his guilt; but proceeds to found on his superior privilege an

earnest, and even vehement, expostulation. We find this in two portions, the first in chap. ii. 17–23, which may be arranged in an introverted parallelism, as follows:—

II. 17. Behold, thou art called a Jew, and reliest on revelation;
18. And gloriest in God, and knowest his will;
And discernest what is more excellent, being instructed by revelation;
19. And art confident that thou art a guide of the blind, a light of those who are in darkness, an instructor of the ignorant, a teacher of babes,
20. Since thou hast the certain knowledge of truth by revelation:
21. Thou, therefore, who art able to teach another, teachest thou not thyself?
Thou who enjoinest not to steal, dost thou steal?
22. Thou who enjoinest not to commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery?
Thou who abhorrest idols, dost thou profane the temple?
23. Thou who gloriest in the law, by breaking the law dost thou dishonour God?

This pointed appeal, which exhibits the guilt of the Jews as aggravated by their means of knowledge, is followed up by one still more solemn, demonstrating the certainty of their punishment. This we find in chap. ii. 2–5.

II. 2. Now we know that the sentence of God is certain against those who commit such things.
3. Thinkest thou this, then, O accuser of those who do such things yet doing the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?
4. Or dost thou despise his rich kindness, and patience, and long-suffering,
Not considering that the kindness of God leadeth thee to repentance?
5. And by thy obduracy and inconsiderate disposition treasure up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath,
And revelation of the judicial righteousness of God?

I must now beg any person who may have yielded himself to my guidance so far to read the entire passage as I have presented it to him; and I must leave it with him then to say whether the unity and completeness which thus appear in it supply a sufficient justification of the freedom I have used in its arrangement.

Assuredly, as a whole no piece of composition can be more perfect than this; and its perfection as a whole is a presumptive proof that the parts are not improperly put together. It is, indeed, not a little remarkable that it should be possible

to take detached portions of a writing from three several places, and find them fit together with so much accuracy and beauty; and the fact that this can be done with the writing can hardly be less than a demonstration that the thoughts were associated in the mind of the writer, whatever cause may have determined the arrangement. What this cause was I am not disposed to say positively, but I have no doubt generally that it lies somewhere within the then well-understood province of parallelism in writing, and I venture on one more particular suggestion.

By an attentive reader it will be observed that the treatment of the favoured position of the Jews is introduced at chap. ii. 1 with great abruptness and vehemence, the fervour of the apostle's mind being apparently kindled by the vision of a self-complacent Jewish objector to the universal application of his preceding statements. The successive steps in the argument are these: we have first the demonstration of the certain punishment of the Jew (chap. ii. 2–5); next the exhibition of the aggravated guilt of the Jew (chap. ii. 17–24); and lastly the actual criminality of the Jew (chap. iii. 10–19); that is to say, we have these topics in the inverse order of nature but in the direct order of feeling—a result to which the outburst of feeling at the commencement of the argument may possibly have given rise.

With some diffidence, but not with any doubt, I submit this suggestion to the intelligent reader's consideration.

Their Position as a favoured People: chap. ii. 25, to iii. 9, and 19.

The only part of the argument respecting the Jews now remaining, is that in which the apostle has to determine their true position as a favoured people, which, of course, he must admit them to be. This concluding portion of his argument is contained in chap. ii. 25 to the end, and chap. iii. 1 to 8, and ver. 9 with the latter part of ver. 19.

On a general view of this passage it is obvious that it divides itself into two principal parts: the former extending from chap. ii. 25 to chap. iii. ver. 8, and containing the argument; the latter consisting of ver. 9 and the latter part of ver. 19, and containing the conclusion.

II. 25. Thy state as circumcised is privileged if thou fulfil the law,
But since thou art a breaker of the law, thou art as if uncircumcised.
26. If, therefore, an uncircumcised person keep the precepts of the law,
Shall not he be regarded as if he were circumcised?
27. For he, by birth uncircumcised yet keeping the law, condemneth
Thee, although scripturally instructed and circumcised, as a breaker of the law.
28. For not he who is so externally only is a Jew,
Nor is that which is outward and corporeal only circumcision;
29. But he who is so internally is a Jew,
And circumcision is a change of the heart.
These have a spiritual as well as a literal meaning,
And the privilege is not human but divine.
III. 1. What, then, is the pre-eminence of a Jew?
Or what the advantage of his circumcision?
2. Much in many respects;
Principally, however, that to the Jews were given the promises of God.
3. But what since some of them disbelieved the promises?
Will not their unbelief frustrate the promise of God?
4. By no means;
For God will be faithful though every man be false:
As it is written—
Thou wilt be justified in thy decisions,
And be irreproachable in thy judgments.
5. But, if our unbelief display the faithfulness of God,
(What am I saying?)
Is not God unjust in inflicting punishment?
(I speak as an objector.)
6. By no means:
In that case how shall God judge the world?
7. If, however, the veracity of God have by my fault become more conspicuous,
Why notwithstanding am I also punished as a sinner?
8. And why may we not say,
(As we are misrepresented to say,
And as some affirm that we teach,)
Let us do evil because good will ensue from it?
Their punishment is just.
9. What, however, is our conclusion?
Have we any religious prerogative?
None whatever.
For we have already proved that all, both Jews and Gentiles, are sinful;
19. So that every person must be put to silence,
And the whole world be acknowledged guilty before God.

On looking carefully at the former of these two portions

—chap. ii. 25 to iii. 8—we see that it also is divided into two parts by the question which occurs in the first verse of chap. iii.

III. 1. What, then, is the pre-eminence of a Jew?
Or what the advantage of his circumcision?

I am far from thinking that this question relates only to the part of the argument which follows it; on the contrary, it is evident in point of fact that it relates equally to that part of the argument which precedes it, and that it might as well stand before chap. ii. 25 as where it does. My opinion is, therefore, that it is artistically placed in the middle of the argument to which it relates, an argument which it certainly divides with great convenience into two very distinct portions. By this view, also, the apparent abruptness of ver. 25 is entirely removed.

The argument may now be considered in its respective parts; and first for chap. ii. 25 to the end. Nearly the whole of this is an introverted parallelism, and may be arranged in the following manner:—

II. 25. Thy state as circumcised is privileged if thou fulfil the law;
But, since thou art a breaker of the law, thou art as if uncircumcised.
26. If, therefore, an uncircumcised person keep the precepts of the law,
Shall not he be regarded as if he were circumcised?
27. For he, by birth uncircumcised yet keeping the law, condemneth
Thee, although scripturally instructed and circumcised, as a breaker of the law.
28. For not he who is so externally only is a Jew,
Nor is that which is outward and corporeal only circumcision:
29. But he who is so internally is a Jew,
And circumcision is a change of the heart.

So far the passage is perfect, but the apostle adds to it a general sentiment which requires to be stated by itself, and the complete statement of which demands the introduction of a nominative case understood. The language of the apostle is highly condensed, and his manner abrupt. Literally thus:—

II. 29. In spirit, not in letter;
Whose praise is not of men, but of God.

This sentence, as I have said, evidently wants a nominative case. This nominative case, however, is readily supplied, and is indeed immediately suggested, by the connexion.

The subjects of which the apostle is treating are Judaism (to use the word in a new but not inadmissible sense) and circumcision; and his meaning evidently is that Judaism and circumcision have a spiritual or typical significance and not merely a literal one, and that the privileged state denoted by them is to be estimated, not by human elements, but divine.

Let us now proceed to chap. iii. ver. 1–8.

III. 1. What, then, is the prerogative of the Jew?
And what the advantage of his circumcision?
2. Much in many respects:
Principally, however, that to the Jews were given the promises of God.

3. But what since some of them disbelieved the promises?
Will not their unbelief frustrate the promise of God?
4. By no means.
For God will be faithful though every man be false:
As it is written,
Thou wilt be justified in thy decisions,
And irreproachable in thy judgments.

5. But, if our unbelief display the faithfulness of God—
(What am I saying?)
Is not God unjust in inflicting punishment?
(I speak as an objector.)
6. By no means:
In that case how shall God judge the world?

7. If, however, the veracity of God have by my fault become more conspicuous,
Why notwithstanding am I punished as a sinner?
8. And why may we not say,
(As we are misrepresented to say,
And as some affirm that we teach,)
Let us do evil because good will ensue from it?

This portion commences with an express statement of the question which in the preceding portion was only implied. The full idea of the question as it here stands is this: Seeing that the benefit of circumcision in its highest sense is not to be had apart from righteous living, what remains for those who are circumcised only? To this the apostle answers, "Much in many respects; chiefly, however, that to the Jews were given the promises of God." A sufficient commentary on the apostle's phrase, "Much in many respects," may be found in his own language in chap. ix. 4, 5, of this epistle:—"To whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God,

and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever."

In the further explanation of this passage everything depends on the sense in which the phrase λογία Θεοῦ is taken. In rendering it "the Oracles of God" our translators had doubtless in view the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament, which were committed to the custody of the Jewish people—a custody which conferred on them a high prerogative and distinction. Λογία Θεοῦ, however, may with perfect propriety be translated "the promises of God," which constitute one species of divine utterance, or oracle; and I strongly incline to an agreement with those commentators who hold it to be the meaning intended here, an argument of no small force in favour of this view being that a much better connexion is thus established with that which follows. See also chap. ix. 4, where a similar expression is employed—"to whom pertain . . . the promises;" while, in the long list of Jewish prerogatives there given, nothing is said of their custody of the Scriptures, either under the phrase "Oracles of God" or any other.

I understand the apostle to say, then, that the principal advantage pertaining to the Jews who were only outwardly such, was that to them were delivered the promises of God—that is to say, the temporal promises made to Abraham and his posterity, and more particularly the promise of the land of Canaan.

To trace the connexion of the apostle's thought in the next verse (ver. 3), it is necessary again to have recourse to the supposition of an idea thrown in by an objector. "What since some did not believe the promises?" says the apostle; a form of expression from which it is evident that the fact that some of the Jews had not believed the promises had been suggested to his mind. Now we know that the fact was so, and we may suppose an objector to have spoken as follows:—"It is true that the promise of Canaan was given to the Jews, but some of them were not much the better for it, a whole generation of them having been for their unbelief overthrown in the wilderness. And does not this annul either the goodness of God in making it, or the faithfulness of God to it after it was made?" This cannot be, the apostle replies, since it is a great principle, and one which must not

be called in question, that, whoever may deceive, God will be always true. And then he adduces, rather in illustration than in support of this axiom, a passage from the Psalms, Ps. li. 4. Although it is not expressed, another idea also seems present to the apostle's thought, namely, that the faithfulness of God to his promise, instead of being obscured by the overthrow of those who did not believe it, was in fact rendered more conspicuous in the fulfilment of the promise to others. In this manner the apostle makes good his first point, that, notwithstanding partial unbelief and non-fulfilment, the promise of Canaan was in reality a great benefit to the Jewish nation as a whole.

The passage contained in ver. 5–8 is complete in itself, and is so artistically constructed that, for the convenience of the reader, I place it again before his eyes in an arranged form.

III. 5. But if our unbelief give occasion for a display of the faithfulness of God—
(What am I saying?)
Is not God unjust in inflicting punishment?
(I speak as an objector.)
6. By no means.
In that case how shall God judge the world?
7. If, however, the veracity of God have by my fault become more conspicuous,
Why notwithstanding am I also punished as a sinner?
8. And why may we not say—
As we are misrepresented to say,
And as some affirm that we teach,
Let us do evil because good will ensue?
Their punishment is just.

Looking on this first as a whole, it obviously arranges itself into two elements, objection and answer. Are there, however, two objections and two answers, or only one in duplicate form? I think the latter; since, upon examination, the objections are one and substantially the same, and the answer is the same to both. Ver. 7 only repeats with slight variation the objection in ver. 5; and ver. 8 is but an expression of the same idea in another form. The objections being thus regarded as one, so also must the answer be. Thus:—

III. 6. By no means.
In that case how shall God judge the world?

This, placed in the middle between the two objections, is

the answer to them both. And the force of it lies in this; that, as God's final judgment of the world will be a process of righteousness, as even the objector himself would admit, so must his acts of specific judgment be; the objection, if of any value, applying equally to both.

Still we have not disposed of the last line in this complex sentence—

III. 8. Their punishment is just.

There are two connexions in which this line may be placed. Either it may belong to that which immediately precedes it, so that the meaning shall be the punishment is just of those who say, Let us do evil because good will ensue from it; or it may belong to that which remotely precedes it—"In that case how shall God judge the world? You will admit that *their* punishment will be just." Of these suggestions I prefer the latter as most pertinent to the apostle's argument; and I have arranged its place accordingly.

Looking now at the passage in detail, the reader will notice the singular construction of ver. 5. It affords a striking example of the alternate parallelism on a small scale, as the whole passage does on a large one.

The course of the apostle's thought in this passage it is not difficult to discern. He imagines an objector raising a difficulty under this form, that human sin advances God's glory, and that he cannot therefore equitably punish the sinner; and to this his only reply is that, if the objection were valid, there could be no judgment of the world, which it is certain there will be, and that a righteous one.

Not unworthy of remark here is the apostle's mode of answering the objections to which in the course of his argument he has found himself liable. Twice we find him falling back upon great principles as upon moral axioms which require no proof, rather than he would allow himself to be driven further into controversy. God *must* be true in his promises, righteous in judging the world; while man must under all circumstances be justly responsible for his conduct. On the part of the advocates of Christianity the example is at least worthy of consideration.

It is now a fair and necessary question, whether the latter portion (ver. 5–8) of the passage we have been considering is pertinent to the apostle's argument respecting the condition

of the Jews. In my opinion it is not so, and there is to be noticed a variation of expression which at once suggests and confirms this opinion. In ver. 3, speaking of the Jews, the pronoun used is in the *third* person—"*their* unbelief;" in ver. 5 the *first* person is employed—"*our* unbelief." It seems to me, therefore, that the apostle has allowed himself to be diverted from an argument which related to the Jews in particular to one of a universal character, the forcible current of his thought thus giving occasion to a digression, from which, however, he quickly returns.

Finally we refer to chap. iii. 9 and ver. 19, latter part.

On glancing at this passage (ver. 9 to 19) the reader will recollect that the larger part of it has already been considered (see p. 254). All that we have to do with now consists of the first and last clauses.

III. 9. What, then? Have we any religious prerogative?
None whatever.
19. For we have already proved that all, both Jews and Gentiles, are sinful,
So that every person must be put to silence,
And the whole world be acknowledged guilty before God.

It is probable that the question is here so distinctly put in order to mark more emphatically the apostle's return from the digression in which he had been engaged.

The question is put in the spirit of a Jew still tenacious of his supposed superiority over a Gentile. "What, then," says he, in a tone of desperation, "are we really no better than they?" And the apostle answers No, inasmuch as his proof of the sinfulness of the Jews has been as complete as was that of the sinfulness of the Gentiles; consequently every mouth is stopped, and the whole world is declared guilty before God.

And thus the first part of the apostle's great argument is completed; that, namely, in which he proposed to establish man's universal need of a method of justification before God.

The Method of Justification opened: chap. iii. 20 to iv. *fin;* and v. 12–21.

Having thus prepared the way, the apostle now proceeds to treat of God's method of justification. His discussion of this subject extends from chap. iii. 20 to the end of chap. iv.;

and, after an interruption comprehending chap. v. 1 to 11, it is resumed and completed in chap. v. 12 *seq.*

III. 20. Therefore through works of law not any man shall be justified before him,
For by law comes only knowledge of sin:
21. But now, apart from law, God's method of justification is manifested,
Witness having been borne to it by the law and the prophets.
22. Even God's method of justification
By faith in Jesus Christ,
For all without exception who trust in him;
For there is no distinction,
23. For all have sinned, and forfeited the favour of God;
24. They being justified without regard to merit,
Through his undeserved favour,
Through the redemption effected by Christ Jesus.
25. Him hath God set forth a propitiatory sacrifice through faith in his blood-shedding,
For a demonstration of his justice in passing by previous sins through the forbearance of God,
26. For a demonstration of his justice also at the present time,
In order that he may be just and may justify him who [seeketh it] by faith.
27. Where now, [in the matter of justification], is boasting?
It is excluded.
On what principle, however, [can it be excluded]?
On the principle of justification by works?
No: but only on the principle of justification by faith.
28. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, apart from works of law.
29. Will God henceforth be the God of the Jews only?
Or will he not be the God of the Gentiles also?
30. Assuredly he will be the God of the Gentiles also:
For by one act of grace he will, by faith, justify both the circumcised and the uncircumcised.
31. Do we, then, render law inoperative on the principle of justification by faith?
By no means: on the contrary, we establish law.
IV. 1. What, then, do we allow that our father Abraham gained by his circumcision?
[Was he not justified by works?
By no means.]
2. For, if Abraham was justified by works he had cause of glorying;
Not before God, however, [hath any man cause of glorying].
3. Further, what saith the Scripture?
Abraham believed in God and it was reckoned for his justification.
4. Now to him who worketh [for justification]
The reward is not reckoned a favour, but a debt;

IV. 5. But to him who doth not work for it, but believeth in order to be justified as ungodly,
Faith is reckoned for justification.
6. As also David describeth the blessedness of the man whom the Lord justifieth without works:
7. Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven,
And whose transgressions are covered;
8. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord doth not reckon sin.
9. This privilege, then, doth it pertain to the circumcised only, or also to the uncircumcised?
Now we are told that Abraham's faith was reckoned for his justification.
10. At what period, then, was it so reckoned?
After he was circumcised? or when he was uncircumcised?
Not after he was circumcised, but when he was uncircumcised.
11. And the mark of circumcision he received as a token of his justification by faith when he was uncircumcised:
So that he is an exemplar of all who believe being uncircumcised,
To show that their faith will also be reckoned for their justification;
12. And an exemplar of circumcised persons also,
To show that they must be, not circumcised only, but imitators of our father Abraham's faith when uncircumcised.
13. For not through law was the promise to Abraham, or to his seed, that he should be heir of the world,
But through his justification by faith.
14. Now if those who claim by law be heirs,
Faith is rendered useless, and the promise is annulled.
15. Further, law tends to produce punishment;
But where there is not a law neither is there transgression.
16. Therefore the blessing comes through faith that it may come by grace,
In order that the promise may be sure to all the seed;
Not to those only who are such being circumcised,
But to those also who are such by imitating Abraham's faith.
He is father of us all [the circumcised and the uncircumcised]—
17. As it is written, A father of diverse nations I have made thee.
[Abraham was made the exemplar of believers] because he so firmly believed in God,
Who giveth life to the dead,
And speaketh of things which are not possible as though they were.
18. Although it was beyond hope, he confidently believed that he should become the father of a large posterity,
According to the declaration, So shall thy seed be.
19. Being not weak in faith,
He considered not the deadness of his own body,
He being an hundred years old,
Neither the deadness of Sarah's womb,
[She being past age.]

IV. 20. At the promise of God he did not hesitate through unbelief,
But he was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God,
21. And was fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform.
22. For this reason it was recorded that his faith was reckoned for his justification.
23. Not for a personal reason only, however, was this recorded,
24. But for our instruction also, to whom our faith will be reckoned for our justification,
If we believe on him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.
25. He was delivered to death for our sins,
And was raised again for our justification.
V. 12. Now, as by one man sin entered the world,
And by that sin death,
And so death extended to all men,
Because therein all men had sinned:—
13. For, before the [Mosaic] law [death-entailing] sin was in the world,
Sin, however, is not reckoned if no law exists:
14. Yet death had dominion from Adam till Moses,
Even over those who had not sinned like Adam.
He was a type of the future [Saviour]—
15. Yet not like the transgression is the act of grace.
For if by one man's transgression the many have become subject to death,
The grace of God, and the act of grace through one man, Jesus Christ, yield to the many more abundant blessing.
16. And not like the consequences of the one transgression are those of the act of grace.
For the sentence pronounced punishment for a single transgression,
But the act of grace provides justification from many transgressions.
17. For if, through the system which entailed death by the transgression of one man death hath prevailed by a single transgression,
Much more through the method of abounding grace and free justification happiness shall prevail through a single righteousness,
Of Jesus Christ.
18. Thus, then, as by one sin came upon all men sentence of death,
So also by one righteousness cometh upon all men happiness through justification.
19. For, as in virtue of the disobedience of the one man the many have been treated as sinners,
So in virtue of the obedience of the one man shall the many be treated as righteous.
20. It is true that, under the operation of moral law, sins have been multiplied:
But where sin has abounded grace hath much more abounded;

V. 21. So that still, as sin prevailed to the diffusion of death,
Grace hath prevailed to the bestowment of eternal happiness,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Justification is by Grace: chap. iii. 20–26.

The apostle commences by a brief *résumé*, in ver. 20, 21, of the argument already completed.

III. 20. Therefore by works of law not any man shall be justified
before him,
For by law comes only knowledge of sin:
21. But now, apart from law, God's method of justification is
manifested;
Witness having been borne to it by the law and the
prophets.

Here the first and third lines are closely connected. In the third and fourth lines the word *law* must be taken in different senses; in the former it must be understood of moral law, written and unwritten; in the latter, of that portion of the Old Testament Scriptures called the Pentateuch, as distinguished from the prophetical writings. The use of the article clearly marks this distinction.

The apostle here re-states in a slightly different form the conclusion at which he has already arrived; namely, that no person can be justified, or declared righteous, "by deeds of law;" since he must here be taken to speak, not only of the law given to the Jews but also of the law written in the heart of the Gentiles—of law, therefore, universally. And he illustrates his meaning by adding that by law, as broken, no end can be arrived at but an ampler knowledge of sin. "But now," he goes on to say, "apart from law, God's method of justification is manifested," as foreshown both in the writings of Moses and of the prophets.

We have now, in ver. 22–24, a singularly compact and comprehensive doctrinal statement, which may be arranged as an introverted parallelism in the following manner:—

III. 22. Even God's method of justification,
By faith in Jesus Christ,
For all without exception who trust in him;
For there is no distinction,
23. For all have sinned and forfeited the favour of God:
24. They being justified without regard to merit,
Through his undeserved favour,
Through the redemption effected by Christ Jesus.

It is no small praise of the system of parallelism, that it is able to throw such a mass of confusion as is this sentence in the authorized version into so lucid and beautiful an order. Writing it (as one may say) straightforwards, or putting the connected lines into immediate juxtaposition, it will appear thus:

Even God's method of justification
Through the redemption effected by Christ Jesus;
By faith in Jesus Christ;
Through his undeserved favour;
For all without exception who trust in him,
They being justified without regard to merit;
For there is no distinction,
For all have sinned, and forfeited the favour of God.

God's method of justification being named in the first line the second gives us the meritorious cause; the third, the instrumental cause; the fourth, the moving cause. The fifth line indicates the practical scope of God's method of justification, that it is for all without exception; this idea being sustained in the three following lines by the freeness of it, which makes no distinction where sin had made none.

The effect, and doubtless the design of the parallelism in this instance, is to present to the mind the greatest features of the subject first and last, and to throw the subordinate ones into diminished prominence by placing them in the centre.

In ver. 22, the phrase εἰς πάντας καὶ ἐπὶ πάντας, "unto all and upon all," I have translated freely "for all without exception;" believing this to be the force and intention of the duplication.

In ver. 25, 26, a further statement of the doctrine of justification is made, also in the form of an introverted parallelism. Availing himself of the name of Jesus Christ immediately preceding, the apostle says:—

III. 25. Him hath God set forth a propitiatory sacrifice through faith in his blood-shedding,
For a demonstration of his justice in passing by previous sins through the forbearance of God,
26. For a demonstration of his justice also at the present time,
In order that he may be just and may justify him who [seeketh it] by faith.

Here the first and fourth lines evidently convey the general sentiment, and explain the way in which "the redemption

effected by Jesus Christ" has been brought about, namely, by the shedding of his blood as "a propitiatory sacrifice;" while in the second and third lines we have the subordinate but not unimportant idea, that the great propitiation operates retrospectively, as well as in the present and the future.

The whole of this passage may now be presented in one view:—

III. 20. Therefore by works of law not any man shall be justified before him,
For by law comes only knowledge of sin;
21. But now, apart from law, God's method of justification is manifested,
Witness having been borne to it by the law and the prophets.

22. Even God's method of justification
By faith in Jesus Christ,
For all without exception who trust in him,
For there is no distinction,
23. For all have sinned, and forfeited the favour of God;
24. They being justified without regard to merit,
Through his undeserved favour,
Through the redemption effected by Christ Jesus.

25. Him hath God set forth a propitiatory sacrifice through faith in his blood-shedding,
For a demonstration of his justice in passing by previous sins through the forbearance of God,
26. For a demonstration of his justice also at the present time;
In order that he may be just and may justify him who [seeketh it] by faith.

One can scarcely avoid an impression that the apostle's treatment of this subject is, considering its great importance, somewhat briefer than might have been expected; and it is somewhat of a relief to find that he recurs to it again, and opens the principle of God's method of justification more elaborately. The passage to which I refer is chap. v. 12–19, to which the reader may advert now, but of which I shall speak more fully hereafter.

Justification is by Faith: chap. iii. 27 to iv. *fin.*

Having thus comprehensively exhibited God's method of justification in its general features, the apostle does not proceed to enlarge upon them severally, but he resumes one of them in particular, and makes it the theme of a lengthened argument. This is the statement that the instrumental cause

of justification is faith. This argument extends to the end of the fourth chapter.

The subject is treated in two aspects, the one general and the other particular; the first part of his argument relates to the doctrine itself, and the second to its bearing on the question of Jewish privilege. The former is contained in chap. iii. ver. 27, 28, 31; the latter in chap. iii. 29, 30, and chap. iv. *passim*. In the alternate arrangement of these passages may be observed one of the usual artifices of parallelism.

Justification by Faith generally: chap. iii. 27, 28, 31.

The argument on this topic consists of two parts; we have first the doctrine proved, and then an objection obviated. The proof of the doctrine is presented as follows:—

III. 27. Where now, [in the matter of justification], is boasting;
It is excluded.
On what principle, however, [can it be excluded]?
On the principle of the justification by works?
No: but only on the principle of justification by faith.
28. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith,
Apart from works of law.

From the mode of expression in the 28th verse, it is evident that the apostle is here introducing an argument in support of the doctrine of justification by faith: "Therefore we conclude," &c. It is singular, perhaps, that he should think it necessary to support by reasoning a doctrine which he had just declared on the authority of inspiration. The nature of the argument employed seems to be this. The apostle throws himself back (in ver. 27), as on an unquestioned and unquestionable axiom, on the principle that in the justification of men before God man must have no ground for boasting, and he thence infers that justification must be by faith, since it is only so that boasting can be excluded.

It would seem natural now to proceed to the next verses (ver. 29, 30); but there are two circumstances which make me hesitate. The first is the entire want of connexion in the subject, and the second is the strict orderliness of thought which is to be arrived at by transposition. Chap. iii. 29 is evidently connected with chap. iv. 1; and ver. 31 comes well into connexion with ver. 27, 28.

Constrained by the evident and close connexion of the thought, therefore, I now take verse 31, in which the apostle adduces and answers an objection to which the doctrine of justification by faith was apparently liable.

III. 31. Do we, then, render law inoperative on the principle of justification by faith?
By no means: on the contrary, we establish law.

The omission of the article in this, as in some former instances, seems to me to determine the meaning of the term law to moral law, written and unwritten. It might be, as the apostle's question intimates, that a method of justifying men by faith would make void, or inoperative, the system of moral law, according to which, as he has previously laid it down, every man was to be dealt with according to his deeds; and to this he answers that, on the contrary, law was established by it. The mode in which this effect would be produced he does not explain; doubtless, because a moment's reflection would make it too obvious to need explanation. Having set forth his Son, Jesus Christ, as a propitiatory sacrifice available through acquiescence in its offering, God has done all that his moral government proposes or requires. Obedience has been rendered and penalty has been borne; and, if not by the transgressor himself, by one whose substitution for the transgressor was an act of competent sovereignty, and whose actual obedience unto death has amply sustained and honoured the moral system. In every respect law has been established, rather than relaxed. See ver. 25, 26.

Justification by Faith as bearing on Jewish privilege: chap. iii. 29, 30: iv. *passim.*

The apostle now enters on an argument of considerable length, on the question whether justification by faith will not place the Gentiles on a par with the Jews; a necessary topic (in that age at least) to be argued, because, as it had been found hard to convince the Jews that they were equally with the Gentiles under condemnation; so it was difficult—probably equally difficult—to convince them that the Gentiles were now to become in point of privilege equal with themselves. He introduces the subject in the following manner in ver. 29, 30.

III. 29. Will God henceforth be the God of the Jews only?
Or will he not be the God of the Gentiles also?
30. Assuredly he will be the God of the Gentiles also;
For by one act of grace he will, by faith, justify both the circumcised and the uncircumcised.

The question here raised is not whether Gentiles as well as Jews may be justified by faith; this has already been fully and decisively declared, and cannot be mooted again. But a tenacious and envious Jew appears to ask whether, Jew and Gentile being both justified by faith, the Gentile will not thenceforth stand in the divine favour on a par with the Jew, and Jewish superiority, so long established and so proudly held, altogether disappear. Will not God be the God of the Gentiles, as he long has been the God of the Jews? To this the apostle answers distinctly in the affirmative; but it is not easy to see at once the force of the reason he assigns: "seeing it is one God"—ἐπείπερ εἷς ὁ Θεὸς—says he, who will by faith justify both. The meaning seems to be, that an act of grace so conspicuous as justification rises above, and so obliterates, all merely secular distinctions, and that the common justification of Jew and Gentile must be taken as emanating from a common love, and as establishing a common privilege.

The course of the apostle's argument now brings up the case of Abraham, who must be acknowledged as an individual to have stood high in the favour of God, but whose prerogative, nevertheless, seems in danger, by this method of justification by faith, of utter annihilation. The apostle thus commences the 4th chapter:—

IV. 1. What, then, do we allow that our father Abraham gained by his circumcision?
[Was he not justified by works?
By no means.]
2. For if Abraham was justified by works he had cause of glorying;
Not before God, however, [hath any man cause of glorying].
3. Further, what saith the Scripture?
Abraham believed in God and it was reckoned for his justification.
4. Now to him who worketh [for justification]
The reward is not reckoned a favour, but a debt;
5. But to him who doth not work for it, but believeth in order to be justified as ungodly,
Faith is reckoned for justification.

IV. 6. As also David describeth the blessedness of the man whom the Lord justifieth without works:
7. Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven,
And whose transgressions are covered:
8. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord doth not reckon sin.

In ver. 1 our translators have improperly placed the phrase κατὰ σάρκα—"according to the flesh." It stands in the Greek, and ought to stand in the English, in connexion, not with "our father," but with the verb "gained." "What do we say, that our father Abraham hath gained κατὰ σάρκα—" that is, by his carnal relation to God, or by his circumcision? *Was he not justified by works?*

That this latter question was implied in the former is manifest from the manner in which the apostle immediately proceeds to reply to it; but upon what ground such an idea was entertained does not appear. It would seem that the Jews rested Abraham's justification on the acceptableness to God of his personal conduct, of which, certainly, his history from first to last contains many striking manifestations. This view, however, the apostle would not admit. To the question, Was not Abraham justified by works? a strong negative is given by implication, and an argument in support of it follows. "No: for if Abraham was justified by works he would have had cause of glorying."

In the latter part of this verse (ver. 2) something must evidently be supplied. If in the matter of justification Abraham had anything to glory in, it must have been "before God." The meaning, however, seems to be that, as in the matter of justification no man has anything to boast of before God, so neither had Abraham, so that he could not have been justified by works. In this argument the apostle falls back, as before, on the axiom that in justification no man can have ground for boasting, as unquestioned and unquestionable. Supplying what is wanting, the passage may be read thus:—

IV. 1. What, then, do we allow that our father Abraham gained by his circumcision?
[Was he not justified by works?
By no means.]
2. For, if Abraham was justified by works he had cause of glorying;
Not before God, however, [hath any man cause of glorying].

The apostle then proceeds (ver. 3) to make in support of

his position an appeal to Scripture. He finds it written in Genesis xv. 6, that "Abraham believed in the LORD and it was counted to him for righteousness." Not a little difficulty attaches to the interpretation of this text, and to the use which the apostle makes of it. As a matter of simple history, it might seem enough to understand this in the sense that God regarded this exercise of confidence in his promise (then just given) as a highly acceptable act of friendship. Not so, however, the apostle. He is speaking of justification; and, if the passage has any proper place in his argument, it must read, "Abraham believed in the Lord and it was counted to him for justification"—not, of course, as the meritorious cause, but as the instrumental cause of it. It does not appear, however, how faith in the mere promise of a numerous posterity could be to Abraham an instrument of justification, and we are led therefore to ask whether anything additional to this may properly be taken into the account. Now the promise of a numerous posterity was only a part of a much larger promise which had been made to Abraham at an earlier period, and which is to be found at length in Genesis xii. 1–4. Without quoting the whole of this (to which, perhaps, the reader will refer), it may be enough to say, that it closes with the words, "And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." This was undoubtedly a promise of the Messiah, and of his salvation; and if we may take Abraham's faith as exercised on the whole of the promise (as I think we may), then his believing "in the Lord" would be tantamount to his believing in Christ, and it might in the strictest sense be regarded as the instrument of his justification. It appears to me that no view short of this can satisfy the apostle's argument in ver. 5, where the phrase his faith "was counted to him for justification" is plainly equivalent to "believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly."

The apostle now proceeds to argue further on the case of Abraham in ver. 4, 5.

Here, as in several former instances, he falls back on a principle already established, namely, that justification is of grace. And then he argues that, if a man works for this benefit, it cannot be of grace, but must be of debt; so that it is only in the case of one who does not work for it, but believes on him who justifies the ungodly, that faith is the

instrument of justification. It is clear, consequently, that, whatever Abraham may have gained by his circumcision, he was not justified by works.

Now the question may be raised, whether faith itself is not a work, and whether it is conclusive to argue that a man is *not* justified by works because he is justified by faith. It must be admitted that, however strongly faith and works are contrasted by the apostle, in some sense faith is a work. In its own nature it is an act of submission and trust; and it is spoken of by our Lord as a work in John vi. 20. Two observations, however, may be made. First, faith is not a work *of law*, concerning which exclusively the apostle is arguing; no scope for it existing but under the dispensation of mercy. Secondly, under the dispensation of mercy its instrumentality to justification does not rest on a principle of law. Faith does not justify the sinner as an act of obedience deserving that result; but as an act of submission to a method which the divine government has devised for his benefit. The connexion between these two is not one of nature and equity, but one of sovereign appointment and grace.

The apostle now departs for a time from the case of Abraham, in order to introduce an illustration from the words of David in the 32nd Psalm (ver. 6–8). The reference of this passage (Psalm xxxii. 1, 2) is obviously to the forgiveness of sin, rather than to justification as distinguishable from it. The point receiving illustration seems to be, that God forgives sin, as he justifies the sinner, "without works," or by an act of grace without regard to merit. The quotation serves to show that the case of Abraham was not at all peculiar, but that all the Old Testament saints found their justification in the same method.

After this collateral illustration the apostle reverts, not to the case of Abraham but to the general subject, in another aspect of it. It might be supposed that justification, if it did not rest on works, might be effected by the act of circumcision. This point the apostle treats in ver. 9–12.

IV. 9. This privilege, then, doth it pertain to the circumcised only, or also to the uncircumcised?
Now we are told that Abraham's faith was reckoned for his justification.

IV. 10. At what period, then, was it so reckoned?
After he was circumcised? or when he was uncircumcised?
Not after he was circumcised, but when he was uncircumcised.
11. And the mark of circumcision he received as a token of his justification by faith when he was uncircumcised:
So that he is an exemplar of all who believe being uncircumcised,
To show that their faith will also be reckoned for their justification;
12. And an exemplar of circumcised persons also,
To show that they must be, not circumcised only, but imitators of our father Abraham's faith when uncircumcised.

In this passage the apostle first raises the general question whether justification is inseparably connected with circumcision, and then he answers it by a reference to the case of Abraham. He adduces the fact, which lies on the surface of the history, that at the period when Abraham was declared to be justified by faith he was not a circumcised man, that rite having been instituted at a later period of his life. To him, consequently, circumcision could not have been the method of obtaining justification. If the question should now arise, What, then, is the use of circumcision? the apostle answers it by saying, that Abraham received it as a token and pledge of that justification by faith which he enjoyed when he was uncircumcised.

Much importance has been attached to the apostle's intimation that circumcision was σημεῖον and σφραγῖδα—a sign and seal, of justification by faith.

The whole case seems to be this. Circumcision, as an act which by a visible mark distinguished Abraham from other men, was to him a token and a proof that God regarded him with peculiar favour; and as his position in the favour of God had been attained through justification by faith, it was also a token to him of that fact likewise. In relation to justification by faith, however, circumcision was a token to Abraham alone, since it was not—could not be—in any other case connected with justification. As a token of God's covenant with Abraham and his seed (see Genesis xvii.) it had respect to temporal blessings exclusively. It seems to me passing strange that Doddridge, and other divines of the same class, should refer to this passage as "an incontestable proof that circumcision was a seal of the covenant of grace."

The apostle now goes on to observe that Abraham,

having thus been justified by faith while uncircumcised, and having been subsequently circumcised, became—πατέρα—"the father" of all believers, whether circumcised or not. The word "father" is here, of course, used metaphorically, and it is to be taken in the sense of an exemplar, or pattern. So Jubal (Gen. iv. 21) was "the father of all such as handle the harp and organ;" that is, he was the first who studied instrumental music, and became an example for the imitation of all who subsequently did so. So Abraham was the first person who was both justified by faith and then circumcised; and his justification by faith when uncircumcised and his subsequent circumcision was adapted to yield instruction to all believers, whether circumcised or not. If they are not circumcised, it teaches them that justification may be attained without it; and if they are circumcised, it teaches them that they are justified, not by their circumcision, but by their faith.

It is proper to observe how this bears on the question of common and equal privilege as between Jews and Gentiles. Abraham, as justified by faith, is an exemplar to *all* believers; from which it is a direct inference that all believers, whether Jew or Gentile, are in a state of common and equal privilege.

This part of his argument being completed, the apostle proceeds to speak of spiritual blessings generally—no longer of justification in particular—and of the manner in which they accrue, both to Abraham and his spiritual seed.

IV. 13. For not through law was the promise to Abraham, or to his seed, that he should be heir of the world,
But through his justification by faith.
14. Now if those who claim by law be heirs,
Faith is rendered useless, and the promise is annulled.
15. Further, law tends to produce punishment,
But where there is not a law neither is there transgression.
16. Therefore the blessing comes through faith that it may come by grace,
In order that the promise may be sure to all the seed;
Not to those only who are such being circumcised,
But to those also who are such by imitating Abraham's faith:
He is father of us all—[the circumcised and the uncircumcised]—
17. As it is written, A father of diverse nations I have made thee.

An obvious and considerable difficulty here is to ascertain what historical fact the apostle takes as the basis of his argu-

ment. To Abraham and to his seed, he says, was given a promise that he, and of course that they also, should be heirs of the world. When was such a promise given? and where is the record of it? In the book of Genesis no such promise appears; and we must either take the apostle to refer to some promise not recorded, or to give his version with some latitude of a portion of the promise as it is written. The latter is, doubtless, the better way. But then of what part of the promise is the apostle's phrase a version? Some critics suggest that by "the world"—κόσμος—may be meant the land of Canaan, to which certainly Abraham and his seed were heirs; but this will not suit the apostle's argument, since to Canaan they were heirs by the law of circumcision, and not through justification by faith. Then of what other portion? Of this—"In thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed"? Scarcely, since Abraham's interest in this was personal. Of this—"I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee"? Yes; if it can be at all satisfactorily made out that being thus "heirs of God" is being also "heirs of the world."

Leaving this perplexed question, however, in the obscurity which seems to me inseparable from it, one thing seems to be certain; namely, that the apostle refers to spiritual and not to temporal blessings, since he refers to blessings which passed, not by the law of circumcision, but through justification by faith. And this will be sufficient for the purpose of the argument.

What follows, then, is an argument respecting the manner in which spiritual blessings accrue to their possessor. If we ask why the apostle should have taken up this subject, the most probable answer is this. It seems as if some one tenacious of the notion of Jewish privilege were still pressing his claim on the ground of God's covenant of circumcision with Abraham. To this the apostle replies by laying it down as an axiom, that the promise to Abraham and his seed, understood not in its carnal but in its spiritual sense, conveyed its blessings, not by any ritual precept, but through justification by faith; and, without adducing proof, he immediately proceeds to draw from this position an important practical inference, in ver. 14. The argument is this: that since the promise conveyed its blessings, not by the law of circumcision, but through justification by faith, those who were merely circumcised could not partake of them.

After this the apostle returns to the proof of the position he had laid down, and shows reason why spiritual blessings should descend by faith. The first is that they could not be secure by any law. "Law," says he, "tends to produce punishment:" that is to say, it takes strict notice of transgression, and punishes it; so that on a system of law, amidst the multiplied chances of transgression there could be no security for the promise. Now "where there is no law," or where proceedings take place wholly apart from law, the effect of transgression is not to be feared. Therefore the blessings of the promise accrue by faith that they may accrue by grace, and so be secure against the influence of transgression, ver. 15, 16.

The apostle then assigns another reason why spiritual blessings should descend by faith; namely, that this is the only method by which they could reach *all* the spiritual seed. For the spiritual seed of Abraham consists, he intimates, of two parts, one circumcised and one uncircumcised; and therefore the promise is by faith that it might "be sure to all the seed."

And, lest this idea of Abraham's spiritual seed comprehending both the circumcised and the uncircumcised should be unacceptable, he adds a confirmation or illustration of it derived from the patriarch's history, by quoting the divine declaration "I have made thee a father of diverse nations." So in fact Abraham was; since, in addition to Isaac and Ishmael, his circumcised children, he had children also by Keturah who were uncircumcised. And this is made by the apostle to foreshadow the mingled character of Abraham's spiritual seed. See Genesis xvii. 4, 5, which is the passage quoted by the apostle, and its fulfilment recorded in chap. xxv. 1–18.

It is needful to notice here that I have taken the first line of ver. 16 as connected with what precedes, as well as with what follows it; as standing between the two arguments, and forming in fact a portion of both. It may be presented thus:—

IV. 16. Therefore the blessing comes through faith that it may come by grace.
15. For a law tends to produce punishment,
But where there is not a law neither is there transgression.

The remaining portion of the chapter now comes before us. In order to its completeness it requires a fresh recital of the fact that Abraham was made the exemplar of believers, a fact for which it assigns the reason: ver. 17–25.

IV. 17. [Abraham was made the exemplar of believers] because he so firmly believed in God,
Who giveth life to the dead,
And speaketh of things which are not possible as though they were.
18. Although it was beyond hope, he confidently believed
That he should become the father of a large posterity;
According to the declaration, So shall thy seed be.
19. Being not weak in faith,
He considered not the deadness of his own body,
He being an hundred years old,
Neither the deadness of Sarah's womb,
[She being past age.]
20. At the promise of God he did not hesitate through unbelief,
But he was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God;
21. And was fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform.
22. For this reason was it recorded that his faith was reckoned for his justification.
23. Not for a personal reason only, however, was this recorded,
24. But for our instruction also, to whom our faith will be reckoned for our justification,
If we believe in him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.
25. He was delivered to death for our sins,
And was raised again for our justification.

Undoubtedly a very remarkable position had been given to Abraham by the ancient record of his justification by faith, and by his being constituted the exemplar of all believers; and the apostle now assigns two reasons for the distinction thus conferred upon him. It was intended, he tells us, as a personal honour on the one hand, and as a general illustration of evangelical truth on the other.

The former of these reasons is stated in ver. 17–22. "Abraham is made the exemplar of believers because he so firmly believed in God, who gives life to the dead, and securely speaks of things which are not possible as though they were,"—that is, he believed that God was in his case able to give life to the dead, and to bring into being a posterity of which there was no apparent possibility. The strength of Abraham's faith is then set forth in several particulars. Notwithstanding all discouragements he was con-

fident that he should be the father of a great multitude, according to that which was spoken, "So shall thy seed be."

In ver. 19 I have supplied a clause, as is obviously required to the completeness both of the sense and the parallelism.

IV. 19. He considered not the deadness of his own body,
He being an hundred years old,
Neither the deadness of Sarah's womb,
[She being past age.]

These discouragements are now stated in detail as affecting both himself and his wife. The nobleness of Abraham's triumph over these discouragements is next displayed; and then it is added, "Therefore was it recorded that his faith was made the instrument of his justification." The idea here is, as I suppose, not that the great strength of Abraham's faith was essential to its justifying power, but that this noble aspect of it pre-eminently rendered it worthy of honour.

On the latter subject the apostle says that the fact that Abraham's faith became the instrument of his justification was recorded, not merely for his own honour, but for the instruction of all; for to us all shall faith become the instrument of our justification, "if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." To me there is much difficulty in the interpretation of this last phrase. There was apparently in the apostle's mind a general comparison between the difficulties attending the production of Abraham's multitudinous posterity, and those attending the raising of Christ from the dead; but it is hard to see how faith in God as having accomplished this act of almighty power can become the instrument of our justification. He adds, indeed, that Christ was "delivered [to death] for our sins, and raised again for our justification"—or as I understand it, "for our *manifest* justification;" the death to which Christ was delivered constituting exclusively the meritorious cause of our justification, and the resurrection of Christ affording evidence of the efficacy of his death. It follows from this that, in raising Christ from the dead, God has done not merely a hard thing, the difficulty of which may be compared to that attending the production of a multitudinous posterity from Abraham, but a significant thing—a thing which presupposes the delivering of Christ to death for our sins (or,

according to chap. iii. 25, his blood-shedding as a propitiatory sacrifice), and demonstrates the perfect sufficiency of that act of expiation. To believe in God, therefore, as having raised up Jesus from the dead, is to believe in him as having delivered Jesus to death as a propitiatory sacrifice, and as having thus testified his entire satisfaction therein. To believe in God as having done this, is (to use a different but equivalent phrase) to acquiesce in his having done it; in other words, it is to acquiesce in the deed of which it is a verification, or to exercise faith in the propitiatory blood-shedding of Jesus. Such faith will become the instrument of our justification.

Summary of the Argument.

This extended argument may now be summed up as follows:—

I. The apostle treats the relative position of Jew and Gentile: chap. iii. 27–iv. 12.
He affirms their equality: chap. iii. 27, 28.
He answers an objection:—Do you not thus overlook the prerogative of Abraham? Surely he was justified by works? chap. iv. 1.
No: and (1) not by works in general. Because—
1. If he were so, he would have ground for boasting; which is impossible: ver. 2.
2. The Scripture expressly declares the contrary: ver. 3.
3. If he were so, he would not be justified by grace; which all must be: ver. 4, 5.
4. The Scripture further illustrates the method: ver. 6–8.

In the arrangement of these topics there is an alternate parallelism. There are two answers to the objection, 1 and 3; and two scriptural references, 2 and 4.

(2) Not by circumcision in particular: ver. 9.
The proof is simple. When Abraham was justified he was not circumcised: ver. 10–12.

II. The apostle treats the manner in which spiritual blessings accrued to Abraham: ver. 13–17.
Not by circumcision, but through justification by faith.
1. Because they cannot accrue by any system of law: ver. 15.

2. Because they cannot otherwise reach *all* the spiritual seed, some of whom are not circumcised: ver. 16.
3. Because there is an analogy to this in Abraham's natural seed: ver. 16, 17.

III. The apostle treats the distinction conferred on Abraham: ver. 17–25.

For this he assigns two reasons:—

1. A personal one: ver. 18–21.
2. A public one: ver. 22–25.

The Federal Principle in Justification: chap. v. 12, *fin.*

We now pass over for the present the first eleven verses of the fifth chapter, which evidently treat in part—and only in part—of the privileges of justification; a subject to which in the course of his argument the apostle has not yet come, but to which his thoughts were not unnaturally led by his discussion of justification by faith. Having, however, a material part of his argument respecting justification yet to bring forward, he resumes that subject in the 12th verse, and we shall accompany him thither.

The important passage which now follows stands in connexion with chap. iv. 25. It is as though an objection were started to this effect: "You make all the world to be saved by one man." "Well," the apostle seems to reply, "all the world have died by one man; and the principle in both cases is the same. For, as by one man," &c.

The passage now before us is remarkable as containing the amplest—I might say, the only—account to be found in the Scriptures of the covenant entered into by God with our first parent; and in treating it, our better way will be in the first instance to take out of it, and separately embody, the historical matter which it presents to us.

Of the Covenant of Eden: chap. v. 12.

The facts assumed by the apostle in relation to this subject, reduced to the form of an independent statement, are these:—

V. 12. By one man sin entered into the world,
And by that sin death;
And so death extended to all men
Because therein all men had sinned.

This passage is undoubtedly of great importance on account of the light which it throws on the Mosaic narrative in the Book of Genesis, a narrative otherwise painfully naked and wanting explanation. It is worthy of observation, however, that, whatever is here taught us, nothing is said by way of direct statement: the apostle is simply drawing a comparison, and all the facts which he wants for his purpose he assumes, either as already known or as implied in those which were so. "*As* by one man," &c. This mode of speaking implies a much larger and more current knowledge of these facts than we might otherwise have imagined.

What is it, however, that the apostle here teaches us?

By the "one man" by whom "sin entered into the world," of course, is meant Adam; but what is the "sin" which entered into the world by him? It is by some insisted on that this is the moral depravity of our nature. This we know as a fact pervades all the race, and it is not to be doubted that from Adam the race derived it. I do not think, however, that this can be the apostle's meaning here, because he immediately adds that death entered into the world by sin. Now death did not enter into the world by the moral depravity which was propagated from Adam, but as the specific consequence of his one act of transgression in eating the forbidden fruit; I conclude, therefore, that the sin intended is that specific transgression, and nothing more.

Reserving for a moment our inquiry into the nature of the death which entered into the world by Adam's sin, let us now look at what the apostle says respecting the principle of its diffusion through the whole race. "And *so* death extended to all men," he says; that is, in the same manner as to Adam, or in consequence of his eating the forbidden fruit. And he adds, "because therein all men had sinned." At first sight this appears inconsistent with the former, but on consideration this seeming inconsistency will disappear. It is evident that in the phrase "all have sinned," the word "sinned" must be taken in a qualified sense, since it is co-extensive with death. Now of those who die a very large proportion—all infants—have never sinned at all in their own persons; while no others except our first parents have sinned in that particular manner with which, and with which alone, death was connected. It is plain that, if in any sense infants have sinned, they can have sinned only *putatively;* that is, they

are supposed or reckoned to have sinned, in virtue of their relation to some party who has committed an actual offence. And a similar idea must be entertained respecting all the descendants of Adam who, however they may have broken the moral law, have not violated the precept of which the threatening of death was the specific sanction. "All have sinned," then, in such manner as to entail death, because, being children of Adam, they are reckoned as participators in his sin. In briefer theological phrase, they sinned in Adam.

This statement of the apostle's carries within itself another idea, an idea implied, though not expressed. If the penalty assigned to Adam's transgression thus attaches itself also to the entire race, it can be by no natural connexion or necessity, but must be by a special sovereign arrangement; a relation being for the purpose divinely constituted between Adam and the race. This relation, of course, was constituted for good as well as for evil, and by it Adam was placed in the position towards the human race of a covenant (or federal) head.

Let us now take up the inquiry which we recently postponed, and ask *what* it was which has been thus diffused through the whole race by Adam's sin. The apostle calls it "death;" but he uses also two other terms for the same thing —*κρίμα* and *κατάκριμα*—rendered by our translators "judgment" and "condemnation:" ver. 16.

It is very well known that, on the ground of this phraseology, many divines have maintained that the whole race of Adam are, for his eating the forbidden fruit, liable to eternal perdition. I do not, as I have plainly said on other occasions, concur in this sentiment; not because I do not allow eternal perdition to have been included in the threatening of death, but because I hold the threatening of death *in that day* as cutting off all posterity, and as shutting up the penal consequences of their sin to the original transgressors. If the race now exists, it exists only by virtue of a new dispensation, in which the consequences of Adam's sin as penal have no place; the liability to eternal perdition has no place at all, and natural and spiritual death no place as penal. By the term "death," consequently, as here used by the apostle, I cannot understand more than natural and spiritual death; but, in truth, I rather agree with those who limit its import

to the former of these exclusively, a view which is strongly confirmed by the language of the apostle in ver. 13 and 14, to come under consideration immediately.

If I am then asked how I can reconcile the strong terms "judgment" and "condemnation" with such an interpretation, my reply is as follows.

I think the English terms are of unnecessary strength as translations of the original; and that the words "sentence" and "punishment" would be adequate. And I think that such a rendering of the terms employed is both admissible and requisite, because it is plain that the apostle does not mean in ver. 18 to *add* anything to his statement in ver. 12, but only to repeat it.

If, however, it should be insisted on that the terms "judgment" and "condemnation" should here be taken in their strongest sense, so as to teach that all mankind are liable to eternal perdition for Adam's sin, I offer two observations. First, that it is a matter passing strange that, of so awful a doctrine as this no trace should be found in any other part of the Oracles of God: secondly, that it is utterly incredible that, if the apostle held such a doctrine, he should not have incorporated it with his view of the ruined condition of mankind. In the early part of the Epistle, from chap. i. 18 to chap. iii. 20, he employs himself in an extended and elaborate exposition of this primary topic; and here, assuredly, if he had believed that all mankind were liable to eternal perdition for Adam's sin, the statement ought, not only to have appeared, but to have occupied the most prominent place: yet, throughout the entire passage the subject exclusively treated is the actual iniquity of mankind, and nothing can be further from the thoughts of either reader or writer than the notion that mankind were "lost and ruined in the fall." My conclusion is, I confess, very decided, that no such doctrine was held by Paul, or has place in this chapter.

After his statement in ver. 12, the apostle proceeds by a transition which is not easily traced. Ver. 12, taken as a whole, is the former half of a comparison, and we should naturally expect the latter half immediately to follow; but the course of the apostle's thought is suddenly arrested, and diverted to a collateral subject. Holding his intended comparison in suspense, he proceeds thus:—

V. 13. Now, before the [Mosaic] law [death-entailing] sin was in the world:
Sin, however, is not reckoned if no law exists:
14. Yet death had dominion from Adam till Moses,
Even over those who had not sinned like Adam.

It is evident that "the law" here spoken of is the law of Moses. But why should the apostle allege the well-known fact that, "*before* the Mosaic law, sin"—that is (from the connexion) a sin entailing death—"was in the world"? Had any persons an idea that the prevalence of death among mankind could be traced to the Mosaic law? It might have been so; since death was freely denounced by this law as the punishment of transgression, and never had been so denounced by any other divine law, that of Eden excepted. And it is evidently this idea which the apostle is meeting, when he says that, antecedently to the Mosaic law, sin, that is, a sin which entailed death, was in the world; which was clear in fact, because death itself, which could have been introduced only by sin, was in the world. And thence he infers that, if there was in the world a sin which entailed death, there must also have been in operation a law or system which connected them together; so that the law of Moses was put out of the question.

This reference to the law of Moses, as I have said above, strongly confirms the idea that the apostle was speaking only of natural death; since, certainly, nothing but natural death was denounced by that law as the punishment of transgression.

Comparison of the Covenant of Redemption with the Covenant of Eden: chap. v. 12–19.

Having thus noticed the facts which are assumed by the apostle in his intended comparison, we may now proceed to the comparison itself. The manner in which he frames it requires to be carefully observed. He sets out in ver. 12 with a phrase indicating a direct process:—

V. 29. Now, as by one man sin entered into the world,
And by that sin death;
And so death extended to all men
Because therein all men had sinned—

He does not, however, carry out the comparison thus commenced, but is arrested in the course of his argument by a

thought suddenly crossing him. This is contained in ver. 13, 14, which have already been adverted to. In the last phrase of ver. 14 the apostle begins his comparison again, but in a different form, by saying that he [Adam] "was a type of the future Saviour." The passage thus introduced extends to the end of ver. 17, and constitutes an introverted parallelism of the form following :—

V. 14. He [Adam] was a type of the future [Saviour]—
15. Yet not like the transgression is the act of grace.
For if by one man's transgression the many have become subject to death,
The grace of God, and the act of grace by one man, Jesus Christ, shall yield to the many more abundant blessing.
16. And not like the consequences of the one transgression are those of the act of grace,
For the sentence pronounced punishment for a single transgression;
But the act of grace provides justification from many transgressions.
17. For if, through the system which entailed death by the transgression of the one man, death hath prevailed by a single transgression,
Much more through the method of abounding grace and free justification, happiness shall prevail through a single righteousness.
Of Jesus Christ.

The bulk of this passage is included between the two connecting phrases—

V. 14. He is a type of the future [Saviour],
17. Of Jesus Christ.

It may be thought, perhaps, that in repeating the words "Jesus Christ" at the close of ver. 17, in order to connect them with the phrase *τοῦ μέλλοντος*—"the coming one," at the close of ver. 14, I have done violence to the composition; but a reader who will take the trouble to examine the context will find that it is not so. In looking at ver. 17, it is evident that the parallelism of which it consists is perfect and complete without the phrase *Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*; which, if added to the second member of it, forms rather an incumbrance than otherwise, there being nothing in the first member to correspond with it. The passage mainly consists of the indication of two points in which the comparison the apostle was about to draw between Adam and Christ did *not* hold good; and they are, according to his usual method, put

into the middle of an introverted parallelism as subordinate topics, that the resemblances may be more prominent. What is intended by Adam being a type of Christ is immediately explained in ver. 18, 19.

V. 18. As by one sin came upon all men sentence of death,
So by one righteousness cometh upon all men happiness through justification.

Ver. 19, which is substantially a repetition of the idea in ver. 18, may be presented as follows:—

V. 19. For, as in virtue of the disobedience of the one man the many have been treated as sinners,
So in virtue of the obedience of the one man shall the many be treated as righteous.

The only phrase in this verse which has any difficulty, is that in the authorized version which speaks of *making* men sinners or righteous by the obedience or disobedience of another. The phrase which I have employed instead of this is on all grounds satisfactory, and easily intelligible. All men ἁμαρτωλοὶ κατεστάθησαν, "have been placed as sinners," or "have been treated as sinners," in virtue of Adam's sin; and so all men shall be treated as righteous in virtue of Christ's righteousness. An illustration of this form of speech may be derived, perhaps, from the similar though not identical expression in 1 John i. 10: ψεύστην ποιοῦμεν αὐτὸν—"We *make* God a liar;" that is, we treat him as such.

The comparison between Christ and Adam being thus distinctly drawn, the apostle returns to the points in which it does not hold good, ver. 15–17. The first of these (ver. 15) may be thus expressed:—

V. 15. Yet, not like the transgression is the act of grace.
For, if by one man's transgression the many have become subject to death,
The grace of God, and the act of grace through the one man, Jesus Christ, shall yield to the many more abundant blessing.

The second point in which the comparison between Christ and Adam fails is exhibited in ver. 16.

V. 16. And not like the consequences of the one transgression are those of the act of grace.
For the sentence pronounced punishment for a single transgression;
But the act of grace provides for justification from many transgressions.

In ver. 17 we have a combination of the two ideas previously expressed.

V. 17. For if, through the system which entailed death by the transgression of the one man, death hath prevailed by a single transgression,
Much more through the method of abounding grace and free justification, happiness shall prevail through a single righteousness.

In these three verses we have the words δωρεὰ, δώρημα, and χάρισμα, used interchangeably for the same idea. Literally, of course, they should all be translated, as in the English version, "gift," or benefit; but I have taken a liberty I trust not unwarrantable in rendering δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι "the act of grace," the act being, in point of fact, the benefit intended. In the translation of ver. 17 I have used considerable freedom, in order to give a fuller expression to the apostle's idea. His language is here not only very much condensed, but it is also modified by a paranomasia, or play upon words: ὁ θάνατος ἐβασίλευσεν . . . ἐν ζωῇ βασιλεύσουσιν — "death hath reigned . . . in life shall reign."

Having thus brought out the comparison between Christ and Adam as drawn by the apostle, let us now look at the condition of mankind as exhibited by means of it.

Christ is to the human race in some respects what Adam was to it; or, as the same apostle elsewhere calls him, "a second Adam," a Federal Head. This, of course, implies that he was part of the race (which in his divine nature he was not), his incarnation having made him a member of it. Not as merely a member of the human race, however, or from any peculiarity in his position in it, could he be its federal head; he was so appointed by divine sovereignty for purposes of mercy.

In what condition, then, was the race at the time of this appointment? Adam, the first federal head, had by transgressing the federal precept subjected the entire race to the curse of that covenant; and in that day the whole race might have been brought to an end by the execution of the sentence, "In the day that thou eatest thou shalt die." Christ is then divinely constituted a second federal head of the human race; this appointment, of course, superseding the first, and abrogating the covenant of which that had been the

basis, with all its penal results, in order to make way for a second dispensation of a different kind. Under this second dispensation it was possible that some results of the first might remain, only divested of their character as punishment, and found congruous with the intention of the supervening system.

In order to effect the abrogation of the first covenant, however, and the cancelling of the sentence which Adam's transgression had brought into bearing, an act of expiation would, of course, be necessary, in which the new federal head should suffer what, on behalf of the race, the first had incurred—namely, death and the displeasure of God; not, however, including moral pravity, which could not attach to Christ, and from which he was specially exempted by the preternatural method by which he became a member of the race. By such act of expiation, which the new federal head was divinely qualified to render, the race (that is, Adam and Eve, who then constituted the whole race) would be entirely, and without any concurrent act of theirs, relieved from the penal consequences of the first covenant.

What, then, would follow? First, that in the course of nature there would be posterity; a race vastly multiplied and extended through many generations. Being under none of the conditions of the Eden covenant, mankind would be thrown back on the requirements and conditions of the moral law, as expressed in this Epistle, chap. ii. 6, *fin.;* every individual being on probation for himself, and all, for the purpose of the general judgment and its issues, having in prospect a resurrection from the dead.

It was of course foreseen that the practical result of this new probation would be universal guilt and liability to condemnation; and a merciful provision for the deliverance of mankind from this foreseen condition of sin and ruin was made by the expiatory sacrifice of Christ, whose single obedience was to become the ground of justification for the race, as Adam's single transgression had been the ground of the ruin of it; the actual benefits, however, to be enjoyed only by those who exercised faith in his blood-shedding. To these the benefit of Christ's obedience would be of large extent, not merely exempting them from the punishment of sin, but introducing them to spiritual privileges of great variety and unspeakable excellency, corresponding with the grace of God

which is exercised towards them, and the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ through whom they are conferred. These privileges are beautifully set out in ch. v. 1–11, and in other passages of this Epistle; and the apostle gives the magnificent idea in 1 Cor. xv. 45 *seq.*, that those who are spiritually united to the second Adam are to acquire a personal resemblance to him at the period of the resurrection.

Of the relation of the Moral Law to the Covenant of Redemption: chap. v. 20, 21.

To this comparison between Christ and Adam the apostle attaches an explanation respecting the attitude and influence of the law (ver. 20 and 21).

The difficulty in the interpretation of this passage lies in determining the sense of the word "law." One of two senses, of course, it must have: it is either the Mosaic law, or the Moral law—some commentators adopting the former sense, and some the latter.

An argument for the Mosaic law as here intended is drawn from the peculiar force of the verb employed, παρεισῆλθεν; which our translators have rendered simply "entered," but which evidently means something more, though precisely what more is scarcely clear. Applied to the Mosaic law it might mean that the law entered accessorily, or temporarily, as that law certainly did. The word may also be used of the moral law, which, after the introduction of the new dispensation, came into operation silently, or without any recorded announcement.

I decide, however, on the moral law as here intended, on two grounds: first, that the article is wanting—νόμος—"*law* entered;" secondly, that the influence of the Mosaic law was not universal but partial, affecting, indeed, too small a portion of the human race to correspond with the breadth of the apostle's idea in the conclusion of the sentence.

The passage seems adapted to answer a thought which the preceding comparison between Christ and Adam was not unlikely to suggest. If the grace of the second Adam had so happily freed the human race from the mischief entailed by the first, was it not to be regretted that the moral law, by its quietly assumed operation, should give occasion to

largely multiplied transgressions? To which the apostle answers thus:—

V. 20. It is true that, under the operation of moral law, sins have been multiplied:
But where sin hath abounded grace hath much more abounded,
21. So that still, as sin prevailed to the diffusion of death,
Grace prevaileth to the bestowment of eternal happiness, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In this passage there are two ideas. The first is, that the exercise of divine grace is fully proportionate to the increase of human guilt. The second is, that divine grace finds in the increase of human guilt an occasion for its greater glory. This second idea must be here, since it is immediately taken up by the apostle in the commencement of the sixth chapter.

The Privileges of Justification: chap. v. 1–11; viii. 10–39.

The apostle has now evidently cleared the way for a consideration of the privileges to which justification is introductory. We find his treatment of this subject, however, in two passages somewhat widely separated from one another; and, in order to have it completely before us, we must return to chap. v. ver. 1–11.

V. 1. Now, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;
2. Through whom also we have access into the state of favour in which we have been placed.
Thus we rejoice in hope of the approval of God.
3. And not only so: but we rejoice in our sufferings [for his sake]:
Knowing that such sufferings give occasion to constancy;
4. And that constancy affordeth evidence of our sincerity;
And that evidence of our sincerity strengtheneth hope;
5. And that such hope putteth not to shame.
Because the love of God is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us.
6. For Christ, when we were utterly helpless,
At the appointed time, died for us ungodly.
7. Now, scarcely for a righteous man will any one die,
Although for a benefactor, perhaps, some one may dare to die:
8. But his love towards us God hath signalised in this,
That when we were enemies Christ died for us.
9. Assuredly, then, having now been justified through his blood-shedding,
We shall be delivered from calamity through him.

V. 10. For since, when we were enemies, we were brought into friendship with God by the death of his Son,
Having been made friends, we shall assuredly be delivered from calamity through his life.
11. And not only so: but we rejoice in God also through our Lord Jesus Christ,
Through whom we have now entered into friendship with him.
VIII. 10. Now, if Christ be in you,
Although the body is subject to death through sin,
The soul is happy through justification.
11. And, if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwell in you,
He who raised Christ from the dead will also raise [in glory] your dead bodies by his Spirit who dwelleth in you.
12. Therefore, brethren, we are under no obligation to corruption, to live corruptly;
13. For, if ye live corruptly ye will suffer perdition:
[But we are under obligation to holiness, to live holily;]
For, if by holiness, ye subdue the exercises of corruption, ye will be happy.
14. Further, whoever are led by the Spirit of God,
These are sons of God.
15. For ye have not received a servile temper, tending again to fear;
But ye have received a filial temper, by which we cry, Father, Father.
16. The Spirit himself jointly witnesseth with our spirit
That we are children of God.
17. And if we are children then are we also heirs,
Heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ.
[It is true, indeed, that we suffer with him;]
If, however, we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified with him:
18. And I reckon our present sufferings not comparable with the glory to be revealed to us.
19. Now, in earnest expectation all mankind await the consummated happiness of the sons of God.
20. For mankind were subjected to death, not by their own desert, but by a sovereign act of God,
21. In hope that the whole race should be delivered from this bondage of corruption,
And be made sharers of the glorious liberation of the sons of God.
22. It is obvious that mankind groan and travail in pain together until now:
23. Nor only they, but also those who enjoy the first-fruits of the Spirit;
Even we ourselves inwardly groan,
Longing for the consummation of our happiness, the [glorious] resurrection of our body.

VIII.24. Now this hoped-for happiness is part of our salvation.
It is not an object possessed, however, inasmuch as it is an object of hope:
For what a man possesseth how can he yet hope for?
25. But, if we hope for what we do not possess,
With patience we wait for it.
26. Also the Spirit concurrently helpeth our weakness.
For what we should pray for in this respect as it behoves we do not know;
But the Spirit himself intercedeth instead of us
With inarticulate groanings.
27. And the Searcher of hearts understandeth the meaning of the Spirit,
Because by the will of God he intercedeth instead of saints.
28. Now we know that all things work together for good,
To those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose.
29. For those whom he foreknew he also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son,
That he might be the first-born among many brethren.
30. And those whom he foreordained he also called,
And those whom he called he also justified,
And those whom he justified he also glorified.
31. What, then, shall we say to these things?
If God be for us, who can be against us?
32. He who spared not his own Son, but delivered him to death for us all,
How will he not, with him, freely give us all things?
33. Who will bring a charge against God's beloved?
It is God who hath justified them:
34. Who is he that can condemn them?
It is Christ who hath died [for them];
Rather, indeed, who hath been raised from the dead,
He is even at the right hand of God,
He also maketh intercession for us.
35. What will sever us from the love of Christ?
Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution,
Or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?
36. As it is written, For thy sake we are exposed to death all the day,
We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.
37. Nay: in all these we more than conquer through him that loved us.
38. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life,
Neither angels, nor principalities, nor powers,
Neither things present, nor things to come,
Neither height, nor depth, nor any other created being,
Will be able to sever us from the love of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Believer's Present Happiness: chap. v. 1–11.

Looking at this passage as a whole, it appears to consist of two parts. The first is a brief but very comprehensive statement of privilege, contained in the first two verses:—

V. 1. Now, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;
2. Through whom we have access into this state of favour in which we have been placed.

The apostle here exhibits the two leading aspects of a believer's happiness. The first is his state of judicial security, or his "peace with God" as "having been justified by faith;" the second his state of personal friendship with God, as having been through Christ placed in a state of favour, or gracious acceptance.

Of the latter of these ideas—that of personal friendship—the whole of the remaining part of the passage appears to be a resumption and expansion. Our translators, indeed, have embodied the first portion of it in the 2nd verse, as though it was an advance upon the preceding statement:—

V. 2. And rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

It is reluctantly that I differ from our translators here. It is undoubtedly true that a "hope of the glory of God"—that is, of future blessedness in heaven—is a privilege of believers in Jesus, and that it supplies unspeakable matter for rejoicing; but it seems to me that the connexion does not allow this idea to be entertained in this place. In ver. 3, and in ver. 11, the apostle repeats the phrase "We rejoice," with the emphatic prefix "And not only so," a phrase which evidently connects the three together, and strongly suggests the idea of a progressive thought. I conclude, therefore, that the passage is one, and that it consists of a climax of three steps, a climax which must be steadily kept in view.

In such a climax as I have here indicated it is impossible to make the first item consist of future glory; nor is it at all necessary to introduce it here, since it is fully treated of elsewhere, in a passage which will shortly come under our consideration. I have, therefore, taken an idea which the word δόξα fairly supplies, that of divine approval; an idea which springs naturally out of the state of personal friendship just spoken of, and enters largely into the believer's present happiness.

On this principle I arrange the passage in the following manner:—

V. 2. Thus we rejoice in hope of the approval of God.

3. And not only so, but we rejoice in our sufferings [for his sake]—
Knowing that such sufferings give occasion to constancy,
4. And that constancy affordeth evidence of our sincerity,
And evidence of our sincerity strengthencth hope,
5. And such hope putteth not to shame.
Because the love of God is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us.
6. For Christ, when we were utterly helpless,
At the appointed time, died for us ungodly.
7. Now, scarcely for a righteous man will any one die;
Although for a benefactor, perhaps, some one may dare to die:
8. But his love towards us God has signalized in this,
That when we were enemies Christ died for us.
9. Assuredly, then, having now been justified through his blood-shedding,
We shall be delivered from calamity through him.
10. For since, when we were enemies, we were brought into friendship with God by the death of his Son,
Having been made friends, we shall assuredly be delivered from calamity through his life.
11. And not only so, but we rejoice in God also through our Lord Jesus Christ,
Through whom we have now entered into friendship with him.

The second phrase of the climax relates to sufferings, and, no doubt, to sufferings encountered in the profession of Christianity. It evidently consists of two portions; the former of which (ver. 3–5) constitutes a perfect sentence, and an introverted parallelism. Here the principal idea is that believers rejoiced in their sufferings for Christ, because the love of God was so copiously shed abroad in their hearts as to inspire them at once with a willingness to suffer, and an assurance of deliverance; the subordinate thought being that such tribulations also yielded spiritual benefits, for the sake of which it was well worth while to endure them. In the manner of expressing these benefits, also, I have departed considerably from the English version, but I hope with no critical impropriety; and whether with any advantage to the sense of the passage I must leave the reader to judge.

The interpretation of the latter portion of this passage

(ver. 6–10), is rendered difficult by the occurrence of the word ὀργη—"wrath," in ver. 9. This naturally leads the reader to think that the apostle is again treating of deliverance from wrath in the sense of condemnation; upon a careful survey of the context, however, it appears certain that the word must not be—cannot be—so understood. Ver. 9, for example, would read thus: "Much more, then, having been justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." Are, then, those who are justified by the blood of Christ still subject to wrath in the sense of condemnation? Or how can this be, when the apostle had just said that the justified "have peace with God"? From the whole context, indeed,—for the apostle has already fully dealt with the question of deliverance from condemnation—it seems inevitable that the word "wrath" must here be taken in some other sense; and another, namely, suffering, is ready to our hands in the passage itself. Having in the former part of it said that believers rejoiced in the midst of tribulation because the love of God was shed abroad in their hearts, the apostle goes on to show how firm a foundation is laid by the manner in which that love had been manifested for the assurance of a final deliverance out of it.

The stress of the apostle's argument lies in the fact that God's love was exercised towards us in a state of sin and ruin, when there was nothing in us either to evolve or sustain it, but the contrary. He enhances his thought by comparing it with the strongest forms of human love. Scarcely for a righteous man would one die, but some might perhaps die for a benefactor. In this place the word ἀγαθὸς may be understood in different ways. First, as synonymous with "righteous man" in the first clause; the sense being that, while persons generally would *scarcely* die for a righteous man, some might *possibly* do so. Secondly, as having an augmented force; the sense being that, although one would not die for a man merely upright, yet for a good—a benevolent—a *very* benevolent man, one might. Thirdly, as having a meaning still more intense; the sense being that, although one would not die for a merely just or good man, yet one might do so for a personal benefactor, or a beloved friend.

In ver. 9, 10, two ideas are suggested, corresponding with the two—judicial security and personal friendship—expressed in ver. 1, 2. Believers will certainly be delivered from tribu-

lation, first, because they are already brought into a state of judicial security, being justified by the blood-shedding of Christ. How shall they who are already by such a process of love delivered from condemnation, not be delivered also from calamity? Secondly, because, by the influence which the death of Christ gives him as our advocate with God, they have been brought into a state of personal friendship with him, one fruit of which will assuredly be that Christ's living power will be employed for their safety.

The third step in the climax of Christian privilege is exhibited in ver. 11; "We rejoice also in God."

Two difficulties attend the interpretation of this passage. On the one hand it is not easy to see what peculiar force may be in the phrase "We rejoice *in God*," as compared with the preceding ideas, on which nevertheless it must be supposed to be an advance; and on the other hand it is not easy to understand the unusual phrase καταλλαγή. "*We* have received *the atonement*" (E.V.) is an infelicitous rendering. The verb καταλλάσσω primarily denotes reconciliation, in the sense not of expiation but of friendship (see the same word in ver. 10); and that is the idea specifically wanted in this passage, since expiation and subsequent justification do not establish a sufficient ground on which rejoicing in God with the emphasis here intended can rest. By our Lord Jesus Christ "we have received reconciliation," or have entered into friendship with God; a friendship so well founded and complete that we rejoice in God himself—though once to us, not only a holy Father displeased, but a righteous Judge in an attitude of vengeance—as now our own in perfect love and enjoyment.

The Believer's future Happiness: chap. viii. 10–28.

Having, in the passage we have just parted with, exhibited the believer's present happiness, the apostle now directs his attention to the future: chap. 8, ver. 10–28.

The first verses (ver. 10–13) are of difficult interpretation, as admitted by the commentators universally; the main question being whether the apostle speaks of a spiritual or a literal resurrection. I adopt the latter of these views; and accordingly propose to consider the passage ver. 10–23 as a whole, and as treating of the same thing; namely, the

future happiness of the believer as consummated in the glorious resurrection of the body. It may facilitate the reader's understanding of the subject if I present to him this passage separately.

VIII. 10. Now, if Christ be in you,
Although the body is subject to death through sin,
The soul is happy through justification.
11. And if the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you,
He who raised up Christ from the dead will also raise [in glory] your dead bodies by his Siprit who dwelleth in you.
12. Therefore, brethren, we are under no obligation to corruption, to live corruptly,
13. For, if ye live corruptly ye will suffer perdition;
[But we are under obligation to holiness, to live holily;]
For if, by holiness ye subdue the exercises of corruption, ye will be happy.
14. Further, whoever are led by the Spirit of God,
These are sons of God.
15. For ye have not received a servile temper, tending again to fear,
But ye have received a filial temper, by which we cry, Father, Father.
16. The Spirit himself jointly witnesseth with our spirit
That we are children of God.
17. And if we are children then are we also heirs,
Heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ.
[It is true, indeed, that we suffer with him;]
If, however, we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified with him:
18. And I reckon our present sufferings not comparable with the glory to be revealed to us.
19. Now, in earnest expectation all mankind await the consummated happiness of the sons of God.
20. For mankind were subjected to death,
Not by their own desert,
But by a sovereign act of God,
21. In hope that the whole race should be delivered from this bondage of corruption,
And be made sharers of the glorious liberation of the sons of God.
22. It is obvious that mankind groan and travail in pain together until now.
23. Nor only they, but also those who enjoy the firstfruits of the Spirit,
Even we ourselves inwardly groan,
Longing for the consummation of our happiness, the [glorious] resurrection of our body.

As I have said above, I regard the whole of this passage as relating to the resurrection of the body; and, upon exami-

nation, we shall find the subject treated with a perfect unity, qualified only by the usual interjection of subordinate topics.

Considering the passage as a whole, it obviously divides itself into two parts: in the former (ver. 10–13) the apostle deduces the resurrection of the body from the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ; and in the latter (ver. 14–23) he brings it out as the undoubted privilege of the sons of God.

To look in the first place at the former of these. In ver. 10 the apostle makes the admission that even believers, highly privileged as they are, are still subject to death, through sin; but he qualifies this by the statement that, through justification, the believer's soul is happy—*τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωή*. And then he adds that the indwelling in believers of the Spirit of God was a pledge that God would raise their dead bodies in glory, as by the same Spirit he had raised Christ's, ver. 11.

In ver. 12, 13, the apostle turns aside for a moment, to draw a practical inference from the preceding statement; the form in which he draws it, however, being incomplete, and requiring one clause to be supplied. The object of the apostle here is to show that holy living is not only a believer's duty, but his interest also. A resurrection, indeed, there will be for the wicked, but one "to shame and everlasting contempt;" while a future glorious life in the body remains for the righteous.

In the latter part of the passage now before us (ver. 14–23), the apostle exhibits a glorious resurrection from the dead as the undoubted privilege of believers as sons of God.

To follow the course of the principal thought, we find in ver. 14 the fact of their sonship asserted; and in ver. 17 its exalted privilege—"heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ." Ver. 19 then introduces "the consummated happiness—*ἀποκάλυψις*—of the sons of God;" called in ver. 21 their "glorious liberation—*ἐλευθερίαν τῆς δόξης*—from the bondage of corruption." The same thing is called in ver. 23 *υἱοθεσία*, "adoption;" and the whole resolves itself at last into the plain phrase *ἀπολύτρωσις*, the redemption, or resurrection in glory, of the body.

I am quite aware that I differ from many interpreters in giving this view of a passage which is admitted on all hands to be, not only one of the most magnificent, but one of the most difficult in the Bible. The whole difficulty, however,

centres in two terms—"the creature," κτίσις; and "vanity," ματαιότης; to the meaning of which as here used we must pay some attention.

Of the many meanings of κτίσις which have been suggested, our choice lies practically between two: it denotes, either the terrestrial universe, or the race of man. There is ample critical authority for both these meanings, and the exigency of the passage must determine between them.

For my own part, I do not think the word κτίσις can here properly be understood of the terrestrial universe. Not, certainly, because it has not been "made subject to vanity," in the sense of "vicissitude, decay, and dissolution," but because I can form no satisfactory idea of the terrestrial universe being inducted "into the glorious liberation of the sons of God." I am aware of the kind of poetical licence which has been taken, and of the fascinating pictures which have been drawn of a renovated earth, a second paradise; but the terrestrial universe *as a whole* seems to me to contain elements, and these neither few nor inconsiderable, utterly incapable of any participation in "the glorious liberation of the sons of God."

I adopt, therefore, the second meaning above suggested of the word κτίσις, and understand by it the human race. Mankind are, always have been, and always will be, in earnest expectation awaiting the consummated felicity of the sons of God, in some portion of which at least they hope to share. But in what portion?

This leads me to examine the word ματαιότης, which our translators have rendered "vanity." The meaning of this word, however, seems to me to be made clear by the phrase at the close of ver. 23 (where the apostle concludes his statement) "the redemption of our body." Now, the resurrection of the body is, as we know, the grand fact by which the felicity of the sons of God is to be consummated, the direct antithesis of death; and all mankind are, as we also know, to share this part of the condition of the sons of God, inasmuch as there is to be a resurrection of the dead, "both of the just and of the unjust." Under the prospective doom of death, with all its fearful antecedents of disease and anguish, it is scarcely a metaphor to say that universal man has been groaning ever since the fall, and will be till "the manifestation of the sons of God." I consequently translate ματαιότης by death.

The course of the apostle's thought, then, is this. He magnifies the future glory of believers by saying that the whole human race has an ardent longing to partake of it. He says that they were made subject to death not without a hope of resurrection; for which, amidst the grievous sufferings of mortality, they may, almost without a metaphor, be conceived as ardently longing. To this the apostle adds that even believers themselves, privileged as they now are, find much occasion to long for their complete felicity.

In subservience to this principal topic the apostle introduces two subordinate topics.

The first of these is in ver. 15, 16, where he refers to the filial temper which believers in Christ had received as an evidence of their sonship, in accordance with the joint testimony of "the Spirit himself."

The second of the subordinate topics occurs in ver. 17, in the latter part of which he says:—

VIII. 17. If, however, we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified with him.

There is evidently great abruptness in this, and something omitted which requires to be supplied. The complete sentence will read thus:—

VIII. 17. [It is true, indeed, that we suffer with him:]
If, however, we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified with him.
And I reckon our present sufferings not comparable with the glory to be revealed to us.

Here is an admission that the high privilege of sonship is qualified by suffering; and here is also the suggestion of two most appropriate and pregnant topics of consolation.

The remaining part of this passage, ver. 24–27, is occupied by two topics by no means remote from the apostle's general subject.

On the one hand he administers a gentle caution against too eager anticipation, as if the coming glory should be already realized; and he finds a quieting consideration in this, that the ultimate glory of the sons of God is, if an object of assured hope, an object of hope only, and therefore an object also of patient waiting: ver. 24, 25.

VIII. 24. Now this hoped-for happiness is part of our salvation.
It is not an object possessed, however, inasmuch as it is an object of hope:
For what a man possesseth how can he yet hope for?

VIII. 25. But, if we hope for what we do not possess,
With patience we wait for it.

On the other hand, the apostle suggests a consideration by which the conscious vagueness of anticipation, by which even their prayers might be painfully affected, might be relieved, ver. 26, 27.

VIII. 26. Also, the Spirit concurrently helpeth our weakness.
For what we should pray for in this respect as it behoves we do not know;
But the Spirit himself intercedeth instead of us with inarticulate groanings.
27. And the Searcher of hearts understandeth the meaning of the Spirit,
Because by the will of God he intercedeth instead of saints.

It has been thought by some that the matter here treated of is the experience of Christians in prayer generally, and most truly, indeed, may it be said that they "know not what to pray for as they ought;" but it is not easy to see how this topic should be here introduced. It seems to me more natural to regard the apostle as still referring to the prospective glory of the sons of God. For this intensely attractive object he had just been exhorting them (ver. 24, 25) to wait patiently; and it seems as though it had been responded—"We may then pray for it; but we do not know how to do even this." To this thought the apostle replies—"This infirmity the Spirit helpeth."

The manner in which the Spirit is said to help this infirmity is, in our version, "with groanings which cannot be uttered." The critics are distinctly of opinion that "*cannot be* uttered," is a mistranslation, and that the phrase really is "with groanings," or rather longings, "which *are not* uttered;" since they are desires directed towards an object not clearly defined.

By inspiring these inarticulate longings the Spirit is said to "make intercession *for us*." Some difficulty has been created by this expression, inasmuch as the work of intercession seems to be peculiarly and exclusively Christ's; but, of course, the phrase must be understood here in such modified sense as may be pertinent to the connexion. When by these influences the Spirit is said *ὑπερεντυγχάνειν*, the meaning must be that he intercedes—or prays—*instead of us;* exciting desires after an object which, although *we* do not clearly

discern it, he does, so that the prayer may be regarded as his and not ours. And this supplies the clue to the 27th verse, which tells us that, since the Spirit's prayer accords with the will of God, God, "who searcheth the heart," perceives and understands it.

The Believer's Security: chap. viii. ver. 28–30.

Still keeping hold of his main subject, "the glory to be revealed," and connecting it in his thoughts with present sufferings, which, though "not worthy to be compared" with it, might nevertheless interfere with its possession, the apostle now proceeds to assert the security of the believer's happiness notwithstanding trials. Adverting in the first instance to these, he affirms, not only by implication that they shall not endanger the future glory, but expressly that they shall contribute to it.

VIII. 28. Now we know that,
To those who love God,
All things work together for good,
To those who are called according to his purpose.

He here exhibits the grounds of his confidence. In doing this he begins with actual facts in the experience of believers. They "love God" and "are called," not merely with the external but with the internal or effectual call. From these experimental facts he advances to the "purpose" of God, "according to" which believers are "called;" an idea which he amplifies, and works out in a magnificent climax.

VIII. 29. For those whom he foreknew he also foreordained
To be conformed to the image of his Son,
That he might be the first-born among many brethren.
30. And those whom he foreordained he also called,
And those whom he called he also justified,
And those whom he justified he also glorified.

In this climax the series is interrupted by a clause descriptive of the *object* of the purpose—"to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren," ver. 29. The interjection of this clause, although it seems to interrupt the flow of the paragraph, is on the strictest principles of parallelistic art—a secondary topic placed in a subordinate position. In substance it is but a repetition of what we have had before, the idea being

obviously the same as that conveyed by the phrase in ver. 17: —"If children, joint-heirs with Christ."

The withdrawment of this clause renders the series perfectly simple, and leaves the climax complete.

VIII. 29. For those whom he foreknew he also foreordained,
30. And those whom he foreordained he also called,
And those whom he called he also justified,
And those whom he justified he also glorified.

The position which the apostle is affirming is that the final happiness of believers is secure, and the argument by which he maintains it is that God has effectually called them according to a purpose, or plan of action, formed by himself. About this divine purpose he tells us the following things.

First, it originated in foreknowledge. "Whom he foreknew." Among the various opinions which have been entertained concerning the meaning of this word, "foreknew," I adopt its strictly literal sense. God, indeed, eternally "foreknew" all things and all beings, evil as well as good; and, as a part of this general fact, he, of course, foreknew also the objects of his eternal love. That is to say God's eternal love was not blind, or directed at random; but was fixed on persons whom he foreknew.

By some divines it has been held that the purpose of God was guided by his foreknowledge of those who would believe. Doubtless, if any would have believed God would have foreknown it, and would have acted accordingly; but, since we now know on his own authority that none would have believed, of course, none could have been foreknown as believing.

Secondly, God's purpose developed itself into a process of destination, or appointment. "Whom he foreknew he foreordained." Those whom he foreknew as objects of his love it was natural that he should at once destine to the happiness his love designed for them—not to a part of it merely, but the whole. This then becomes one of his decrees, like all his other decrees irrevocable, and sure of accomplishment.

Thirdly, a practical step naturally following on foreordination now follows: "Whom he foreordained he also called." This, as I have already said, is effectual calling, the act of gracious power by which God brings his chosen to the knowledge of Christ, and the obedience of faith. By this act the eternal purpose makes a practical manifestation of

itself in this world, and a large step is taken towards its fulfilment.

Fourthly, on effectual calling ensues a state of actual privilege: "Whom he called he also justified." Justification is with eminent propriety put here as constituting the first step in Christian privilege, and as providing entrance into its whole extent, according to chap. v. 1, 2.

Fifthly, spiritual privilege on earth entails perfect happiness in heaven: "Whom he justified he also glorified." This being the issue on which eternal love had its eye, and to which all preceding steps had been conducive and preparatory. A purpose so formed and carried out *could not* fail.

Notice will naturally be taken of the *past tense* in which the verbs are used, even to the last—to that which is not yet done. It is on this mode of speaking, I suppose, that some persons have founded the notion that believers are eternally justified. That they are so *in God's eternal purpose* is undoubtedly true; but this is only another mode of saying that God has eternally purposed that they should be so. The use of the past tense seems to be intended simply as a means of indicating the absolute certainty of the final issue on the part of God, who "calleth things that are not as though they were."

The entire scope of the apostle's argument comprehends such considerations as these.

That God's dealings of grace are according to a purpose, as all his operations must be.

God's dealings with his people being according to such a purpose, he can in no respect be either taken by surprise, or be found unprepared for contingencies.

His purposes are from his own nature eternal, unchangeable, and irreversible.

His purposes have the control of all his resources. They are the commanding energy at whose bidding Almighty power evermore works. If it should be deemed in any degree presumptuous thus to connect the final salvation of believers with the eternal purposes of God, it should be observed that the apostle carefully argues to things unknown from things that are known. He begins with effectual calling, a thing which takes place in this world, and is ascertainable by unequivocal proofs; and from thence he argues, as he fairly may, both to predestination on the one hand and to glorification on the other.

The Believer's Triumph: ver. 31–39.

The apostle now bursts forth into a rapturous expression of highly-wrought feeling, and pens a passage which must certainly be placed among the most magnificent portions of Holy Writ. The underlying idea to which the exprest tone of triumph relates is this, that there are many obstacles—or rather, that there are powerful adversaries—to the final salvation of believers; and the feeling which he labours to utter is one of imperturbable conviction that no adversary shall prevail.

In order to show the grounds on which this conviction rests, the apostle takes up again the topics which he had previously been handling. And first in order the last of them:—

VIII. 31. If God be for us,
Who can be against us?

This is the idea of ver. 28–30; that the final salvation of believers is the object of God's eternal and unchangeable purpose. God IS for us; who, then, *can* with effect be against us?

The second idea springs out of this, and is to the effect that, as, on the one hand, no one can defeat God's purpose, so he himself will not abandon it. The proof of this is derived with great simplicity from the fact that God has given his Son, a gift which includes and guarantees all the rest:—

VIII. 32. He that spared not his own Son,
But delivered him to death for us all,
How will he not,
With him,
Freely give us all things?

The apostle's mind then passes to the several sources of difficulty, or of opposition, in the way of the believer's salvation, and treats them respectively under two heads.

In the first place it suggests itself to him that believers have been as rebels under condemnation, and are still far from perfectly holy, from whence perhaps a difficulty may arise. To this he replies in ver. 33, 34, in a passage con-

structed with parallelistic art. A careful consideration of it leads me to throw it into the following form :—

VIII. 33. Who will bring a charge against God's beloved?
It is God who hath justified them:
34. Who is he that can condemn them?
It is Christ who hath died [for them];
Rather, indeed, who hath been raised from the dead.
He is even at the right hand of God;
He also maketh intercession for us.

The direct antithesis between justifying and condemning in the second and third lines of this passage induces me to think that they should be placed together; so that the answer to the question in the first line shall be found in the last four. There is thus formed an introverted parallelism, in which, as usual, a subordinate idea is thrown into the middle.

The argument here employed by the apostle is complete and unanswerable. The question of the condemnation of believers lies exclusively with God, for he is the Judge, and he justifies them. Besides, the provision made for their justification and acceptance is adapted and perfect. Christ died to make expiation for their sins, and the efficacy of his sacrifice is proved by his resurrection from the dead; while our interest is guaranteed by his position of power at the right hand of God, and his prevailing intercession for us there.

Having thus disposed of a first source of difficulty, the apostle adverts to a second, arising from the various forms of persecution to which Christian professors were subject. On a first glance at this portion of the passage, it seems as though the question should be, not so much shall persecution separate believers from Christ's love to them, as shall persecution overcome their love to Christ; on a second view, however, and on considering the harmony of the entire passage, this idea does not seem to be admissible. Persecution might be regarded as a token that Christ's love was weaned from his people, since it might be thought that he would not otherwise abandon them to it; but the reply to this suggestion is derived from the consideration that in point of fact it was not so, the courage amidst persecution which was actually displayed by the disciples of Christ being a convincing proof of his continued and ever faithful love.

VIII. 35. What will sever us from the love of Christ?
Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution,
Or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?
36. As it is written—
For thy sake we are exposed to death all the day,
We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.
37. Nay:
In all these we more than conquer through him who loved us.

These two sources of supposable peril to a believer's salvation being thus disposed of, the apostle winds up with a glorious utterance comprehending all other conceivable dangers of every kind; not so much intimating, I conceive, that the various names he employs denote any real hostile agencies, as affirming a triumphant conviction that amidst all possible dangers, whether of the seen or of the unseen world, believers in Jesus are safe.

VIII. 38. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life,
Neither angels, nor principalities, nor powers,
Neither things present, nor things to come,
39. Neither height, nor depth, nor any other created being,
Will be able to sever us from the love of God through Christ Jesus our Lord.

I am obliged here to make one critical remark. I have said in the preface that I follow Tischendorf's text. In his text, however, the word δυνάμεις—"powers"—in ver. 38, is placed at the close of the verse; where it stands so awkwardly that Alford, while adopting the reading, suggests some accidental derangement of the order. For the English reader I have preferred the obviously natural order to the critical one.

The entire passage may be arranged in the following manner:—

VIII. 31. What, then, shall we say to these things?

If God be for us,
Who can be against us?

32. He who spared not his own Son
But delivered him to death for us all,
How will he not,
With him,
Freely give us all things?

VIII. 33. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's beloved?
It is God who justifieth them:

34. Who is he that can condemn them?
It is Christ who died [for them],
Rather, indeed, who hath been raised from the dead.
He is even at the right hand of God;
He also maketh intercession for us.

35. What will sever us from the love of Christ?
Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution,
Or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36. As it is written—
For thy sake we are exposed to death all the day,
We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37. Nay:
In all these things we more than conquer through him who loved us.

38. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life,
Neither angels, nor principalities, nor powers,
Neither things present, nor things to come,

39. Neither height, nor depth, nor any other created being,
Will be able to sever us from the love of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Section II.—*Of Sanctification:* chap. vi. 1 to viii. 9.

VI. 1. What, then, may we infer [from this superabounding grace]?
Shall we continue in sin in order that grace may abound?

2. By no means.
We who have died to sin, how can we any longer live in subjection to it?

3. Or remember ye not that, when we made our profession of Christ Jesus by baptism, we were baptized in a mode resembling his death?

4. Now, having been baptized in a mode resembling his death, we have in a similar manner been buried as he was.
Consequently, as Christ was raised from the dead [to a new life] for the glory of the Father,
We also should rise to a new life [for the glory of the Father].

5. For if we have been in a figure united with him in his death,
We should be so likewise in his resurrection.

6. This also should be considered, that our former self is crucified as he was;
And thus the bondman of sin is virtually slain,
So that we cannot now be slaves to sin.

7. For the slave who is dead is freed [from all masters;
And we, therefore, being dead to it, are freed] from sin.

8. And if we have died like Christ, we are sure that like him we shall also live.

VI. 9. Now we know that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dieth no more;
Death hath no further right of dominion over him.
10. For in that he died, in expiation for sin he died once for all;
But in that he liveth, he liveth [evermore] to do the will of God.
11. So likewise reckon ye yourselves [to be both dead and alive]:
On the one hand, dead to the rule of sin;
On the other hand, alive evermore to do the will of God,
Like Christ Jesus.
12. Let not sin, therefore, rule over your dead person by your obeying its impulses;
13. Neither yield your faculties to sin as instruments of unrighteousness:
But devote yourselves to God as persons whose former self is dead, and who live anew;
And yield your faculties to God as instruments of righteousness,
14. For sin shall not have dominion over you.
[It is true that] we are not subject to legal penalties, but in a state of favour.
15. But what is to be inferred from this?
Shall we sin because we are not subject to legal penalties, but in a state of favour?
By no means.
16. Know ye not that whomsoever ye willingly obey, ye are servants of him ye obey;
Whether servants of sin to perdition or of obedience to justification?
17. Now God be thanked that ye were slaves of sin,
But ye have cordially moulded yourselves by the doctrine in which ye were instructed,
18. And, being emancipated from sin, have become servants of righteousness—
19. I use a common metaphor for easier illustration:
For as ye have yielded yourselves servants to uncleanness and iniquity by practising iniquity,
So ye now yield yourselves servants to righteousness by practising holiness.
20. As, when ye were servants of sin, ye were estranged from righteousness.
21. Further, what fruit had ye formerly?
Of those things ye are now ashamed,
And the end of those things is perdition:
22. But now, being emancipated from sin and become servants to God,
Ye have your fruit unto holiness,
And the end will be eternal happiness.
23. Now the wages of sin is perdition;
But the gift of God is eternal happiness through Christ Jesus our Lord.

VII. 1. Do yon not understand, brethren,
(For I speak to those who know [the principles of] law,)
That a law hath a claim over a person only so long as [the source of its obligation] existeth?
2. Thus a woman who hath an husband is bound by the conjugal law only as long as he liveth;
But, if her husband be dead, she is released from conjugal obligation.
3. So, if while her husband is living she be married to another man, she will be an adulteress;
But, if her husband be dead, she is released from the conjugal law,
So that she will not be an adulteress although she be married to another man.
4. After a similar manner, my brethren, the law has become dead to you by the death of Christ;
So that ye may be married to another,
To him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may live acceptably to God.
5. For, when we were under the law, sinful affections which [were disapproved] by the law
Wrought in us deeds exposing us to condemnation;
6. But now [that we are in a state of favour],
We are released from [the condemning power of] the law,
That being impotent by which we were subjected to it.
We thus serve God with a new spirit of freedom,
And not with the old liability to punishment.
7. What, then, may be inferred?
Is the law to blame?
By no means.
I should not, indeed, have become conscious of sin but by the law.
For example, I should not have been conscious of lust, if the law had not said Thou shalt not lust.
8. But it was sin which, deriving its power to condemn from the commandment, excited in me affections [consciously evil and destructive];
For, apart from the law, sin was inoperative [to this effect].
9. For once, when I was ignorant of the law, I was happy;
But, when the commandment came home to me, sin became active and I wretched.
10. And the commandment, which was adapted to make me happy, I found to be a cause of misery;
11. Because sin, deriving its power from the commandment, led me on, and by it destroyed me.
12. But this only shows that the law is holy,
And the commandment holy, and just, and good.
13. That which is good, then, became a cause of misery to me?
By no means:
[Not the law], but sin [was the cause of my misery].
For sin manifestly destroys me by that which is good;
So that by means of the commandment sin exhibits its extreme malignity.

VII. 14. Now we know that the law requires holiness:
I, however, am prone to evil, enslaved by sin.
15. So that what I practise I do not approve:
For I do not perform what I prefer,
But I do what I hate.
16. If, however, I do not prefer the evil which I do, I acquiesce in the goodness of the law;
17. And it is not so much I who do it as sin dwelling in me.
18. I acknowledge that in me, as unrenewed, a holy impulse does not dwell:
For although I prefer what is holy, I cannot perform it.
19. For I do not do good, which I prefer;
But I do evil, which I do not prefer.
20. If, however, I do not prefer what I do,
It is not so much I who do it as sin dwelling in me.
21. On the other hand, I detect a force opposing me when I desire to do good,
Because evil prevails over me.
22. For I delight in the divine impulse actuating my renewed nature;
23. But I detect another force in my corrupt nature thwarting the impulse of my renewed mind,
And enslaving me to the [sinful] force in my corrupt nature.
24. O wretched man that I am!
Who will release me from this dead carcase?
25. I thank God that, through Jesus Christ our Lord, [there is relief.]
Thus I personally [act a twofold part]:
In my renewed nature I am actuated by a holy impulse,
But in my corrupt nature by a sinful impulse.
VIII. 1. This struggle doth not entail condemnation on those who believe in Christ Jesus.
2. And the power of holiness, which tendeth to happiness through Christ Jesus,
Hath released me from the power of sin, which tendeth to perdition.
3. For the thing which was impracticable by the law,
Because it was powerless through corruption,
God [hath accomplished]:
Having sent his own Son in the nature of sinful man,
And to make expiation for sin,
He hath punished sin in human nature:
4. So that the precepts of the law may be fulfilled by us [who believe in him],
And who walk not corruptly, but holily.
5. For those who are corrupt prefer corrupt things,
And those who are holy prefer holy things:
6. Now the preference of corrupt things is perdition,
And the preference of holy things is happiness and joy.
7. Because the preference of corrupt things is enmity towards God,

For it is not conformable to the law of God,
Neither, indeed, can it be so.
VIII. 8. Those, therefore, who are corrupt cannot be pleasing to God.
9. You, however, are not corrupt, but holy, since the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.
And, if any one have not the Spirit of Christ, he is not his.

The apostle has now completed his treatment of God's method of justification, and he proceeds to the kindred, and very important subject of sanctification, with which, in various aspects, the sixth and seventh chapters are occupied. He does not treat this subject, however, in a way directly didactic; but rather he raises in a way of objection, or of question, the moral points which he means to discuss.

The Grace of God no reason for Sin: chap. vi. 1–14.

Having just before (chap. v. 20) said that divine grace finds in the abounding of human iniquity an occasion for its own richer display, the apostle seems to feel that he has laid himself open to an apparent objection; namely, that such a sentiment would lead us to continue in sin in order that grace may abound. This idea he here vehemently repudiates, and he dwells on it to ver. 14.

Having in the commencement of this passage stated the inference which he repudiates, he proceeds to sustain his attitude by an argument founded on the general principle, that believers in Christ cannot live in sin because they have died to it.

VI. 1. What, then, may we infer [from this superabounding grace]?
Shall we continue in sin in order that grace may abound?
2. By no means,
We who have died to sin, how can we any longer live in subjection to it?

And then he adduces the ground on which he bases his assertion that believers in Christ have died to sin, namely, that in the experience of believers there is a likeness to the experience of Christ; that what occurred to him naturally is wrought in them spiritually, or in a figure; that as he died so they die—he having died *for* sin and they dying *to* sin. This leading idea runs through the whole passage, and is set forth by two illustrations, the first derived from the

import of Christian profession, the second from the facts of Christian experience.

To the question how does it appear that believers bear a resemblance to Christ in his death? the apostle answers first, that the act of Christian profession demonstrates it; ver. 3.

VI. 3. Or remember ye not that, when we made our profession of Christ Jesus by baptism, we were baptized in a mode resembling his death?
4. Now, having been baptized in a mode resembling his death, we have in a similar manner been buried as he was.
Consequently, as Christ was raised from the dead [to a new life] for the glory of the Father,
We also should rise to a new life [for the glory of the Father].
5. For if we have been, in a figure, united with him in his death,
We should be so likewise in his resurrection.

This reference of the apostle to the act of baptism is interesting, as throwing an indirect but vivid light on the mode in which it was at that time performed. The primary meaning of the term baptize is thus illustrated by a metaphor. To be baptized is like being buried; a process to which, certainly, no mode of baptism but immersion bears any resemblance. The force of the metaphor is acknowledged by the best critics of all classes.

On this primitive mode of Christian profession the apostle founds a just and forcible practical appeal.

Two ideas lie at the basis of it. Those who are baptized by immersion are baptized *εἰς τὸν θάνατον*—"into death"—are baptized in a manner resembling death, or the treatment of the dead; that is to say, by being immersed in water they are, as it were, buried, or treated as if they were dead. And as immersion bears a resemblance to death, so immersion as our act of professing Christ makes us bear a resemblance to *his* death. As he died and was buried, so we, by "baptism in resemblance of death," in a figure die and are buried like him.

Now comes the further bearing of the comparison. Christ when he had been buried rose again, and rose to a new kind of life; so when in baptism we, like him, are buried, we like him should rise again, and rise to a new life. It is only thus that the resemblance will be complete.

In ver. 4 there is a singular parallelistic artifice which requires to be pointed out. The two lines read literally thus:—

VI. 4. As Christ was raised from the dead for the glory of the Father,
So we also should rise to a new life.

These two lines obviously do not correspond; but it is remarkable that the single ideas contained in each are equally applicable to both. As Christ rose from his literal grave "for the glory of the Father," so should a Christian from his figurative grave; and as a Christian should rise to pursue a new life, so did Christ. It seems as though the two ideas were divided, one to each line, in order to favour the parallelism, and that the complete sense will be expressed thus:—

VI. 4. As Christ was raised from the dead [to a new life] for the glory of the Father,
So we also should rise to a new life [for the glory of the Father].

In ver. 6–14, the apostle treats the idea of a believer's likeness to Christ in a different manner. In answer to the question how does it appear that believers bear a resemblance to Christ in his death? he says, secondly, that this is a fact of their Christian experience. In a figurative sense we are "crucified with him"—or rather, *like* him. This idea he opens farther by saying that "our old man"—*ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος*—is crucified; meaning, it seems, by the "old man" the entire mass of our passions and habits before conversion, our former self; and by our old man being crucified, he means that all these habits and passions are subjected to a process of slow and painful, but certain, correction, a moral process bearing a resemblance to corporeal crucifixion. He then goes on to show the natural and designed end of this process of crucifixion; namely, that "the body of sin—*σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας*—should be destroyed." Now "the body of sin" is but another name for "our old man;" and "our old man" is here called "the body of sin," not so much because the body is itself sinful, as because it is that part of ourselves over which, and over which only, sin as a tyrant reigns. "Our old man" being thus virtually slain, as a person who is nailed to the cross may be said to be, we cannot be any longer enslaved by sin. That this would be the consequence is plain; because, as he who is dead is obviously liberated from all tyrants, so we—"our old man," the bondman over whom sin

reigned, being virtually dead—are necessarily liberated from the tyranny of sin. I render the passage as follows :—

VI. 6. This also should be considered, that our former self is crucified as he was,
And thus the bondman of sin is virtually slain,
So that we cannot now be slaves to sin.
7. For the slave who is dead is freed [from all masters ;
And we, therefore, being dead to it, are freed] from sin.

The reader will observe that in the rendering of the 7th verse I have used considerable freedom. Literally it reads thus :—

VI. 7. For he who has died is freed from sin.

It is only through its extreme condensation that this passage is obscure. The apostle obviously means that he who has died *to sin* is freed from it—that is, from its tyranny; and it is both easy and natural to supply from ver. 6, the general principle on which this assertion rests ; namely, that a slave when he is dead is free from all masters.

The apostle now proceeds with his argument :—

VI. 8. And if we have died like Christ, we are sure that like him we shall also live.
9. Now we know that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dieth no more;
Death hath no further right of dominion over him.
10. For in that he died, [in expiation for sin] he died once for all;
And in that he liveth, he liveth [evermore] to do the will of God.

When the apostle says briefly that, inasmuch as Christ liveth, he liveth τῷ Θεῷ—"by, or to, God," there is evidently something to be supplied; and the reader has his choice of the idea which, in his judgment, may best sustain the assertion of the perpetuity of Christ's resumed life. The concluding phrase "evermore" is the natural and inevitable antithesis of "once for all," in the preceding line.

The apostle here makes an application of the foregoing comparison between Christ and the believer, in both the parts in which he has opened it; showing the believer to be dead like Christ, on the one hand, and alive like Christ, on the other. The completeness of the parallelism requires a phrase to be supplied in the first line.

VI. 11. So likewise reckon ye yourselves to be [both dead and alive]—
On the one hand, dead to [the rule of] sin,
On the other hand, alive [evermore] to [do the will of] God:
Like Christ Jesus.

The apostle concludes this part of his argument by a cogent exhortation.

VI. 12. Let not sin, therefore, reign over your dead person by your obeying its impulses,
13. Neither yield your faculties to sin as instruments of unrighteousness:
But devote yourselves to God as persons whose former self is dead, and who live anew;
And yield your faculties to God as instruments of righteousness.

Sin is here represented as a tyrannical power striving to recover its empire, and believers are stimulated to resistance by a consideration of their likeness to Christ in both their profession and experience, as opened in the preceding verses. In ver. 12, by the "dead person" is, of course, to be understood the "old man" or the former self, which, as crucified, is virtually dead, and so free from the tyranny of sin; while, nevertheless, sin may by us be permitted to reign over it, through the process of crucifixion being neglected. When, in ver. 13, believers are exhorted to yield themselves to God *ὡς ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντας*—"as alive from the dead"—the full meaning evidently is, that they should do as persons who have died in the former self over which sin reigned, and who are now developing a new life.

In the last line of the paragraph (ver. 14) a connexion may be traced with ver. 11, throwing the whole passage into the form of an introverted parallelism.

VI. 11. So likewise reckon ye yourselves to be [both dead and alive]:
On the one hand, dead [to the rule of] sin,
On the other hand, alive [evermore] to do the will of God;
Like Christ Jesus.
12. Let not sin, therefore, rule over your dead person by your obeying its impulses;
13. Neither yield your faculties to sin as instruments of unrighteousness:
But devote yourselves to God as persons whose former self is dead, and who live anew;
And yield your faculties to God as instruments of righteousness.
14. For sin shall not have dominion over you.

A state of favour no reason for Sin: chap. vi. 14 *fin.*

Many persons take ver. 14 as it stands in our Bibles, and regard the apostle as assigning the fact that believers "are not under the law, but under grace," as a reason "why sin shall not have dominion over" them; but the best consideration I can give to the matter induces me to agree with those who detach the latter clause of ver. 14, and place it in immediate connexion with what follows. The apostle seems to me to be here answering another objection which he supposes to be raised, and one which, indeed, might naturally enough arise in the mind of his reader. Impressed by the urgency of his exhortation to holiness of life, a supposed believer might well say, "We are not, however, under law, are we? Are we not in a state of favour; a state in which, if we sin, we are not liable to the penalties of law, but assured of a gracious pardon?" To which Paul promptly answers, "O, yes; believers in Jesus are not under law, but in a state of favour:" but he immediately enters his protest against this being converted into a plea for unholy living.

VI. 14. [It is true that] we are not subject to legal penalties, but in a state of favour.
15. But what is to be inferred from this?
Shall we sin because we are not subject to legal penalties but in a state of favour?
By no means.

The apostle supports this disclaimer by adducing in the first instance a general principle; namely, this—that the practice determines the condition. We are in fact the servants of him whom we obey, and we must take the wages of the respective masters; a course of sin must end in perdition, and nothing short of a course of obedience can lead to happiness through justification. There is nothing in the riches of divine grace tending to sever this inevitable connexion. The complete expression of this principle is arrived at by placing together ver. 16 and 23; all the matters between these being subordinate, and being thrown into the middle as in an introverted parallelism.

On this principle I adopt the following arrangement:—

VI. 16. Know ye not that, whomsoever ye willingly obey, ye are servants of him ye obey;
Whether servants of sin to perdition; or of obedience to justification?
23. Now the wages of sin is perdition:
But the gift of God is eternal happiness through Christ Jesus our Lord.

The reader will observe the art with which "eternal happiness" is not called the *wages* of obedience, which the strict antithesis would have required, but "the gift of God through Christ Jesus our Lord." And yet it is as closely connected with obedience as if it were its wages.

Having thus laid down his general principle, the apostle adduces two subordinate topics. Of these the first is the experimental fact of the holy life of the disciples at Rome.

VI. 17. Now God be thanked that ye were servants of sin,
But ye have cordially moulded yourselves by the doctrine in which ye were instructed;
18. And, being emancipated from sin, have become servants of righteousness.

The phraseology employed in verse 17 requires notice: ὑπηκούσατε . . . εἰς ὃν παρεδόθητε τύπον διδαχῆς—literally, "Ye have obeyed the mould of doctrine to which ye were delivered." The difficulty here is, not to arrive at the general sense, but to deal satisfactorily with the particular terms. The word which creates the difficulty is τύπος, of which the literal meaning is primarily a mould, and secondarily a model. The application to this word of the verb ὑπακούειν — to obey — (which clearly belongs to διδαχή, "doctrine")—is so unnatural, that some eminent critics are for ignoring it altogether as used pleonastically. I can hardly consent to this, however, when I look at the preceding phrase, εἰς ὃν παρεδόθητε,—"to which ye were delivered." On mature consideration, it seems to me that two sentences are here so combined and interwoven, that the construction cannot be made clear without dividing them the one from the other. Thus, in the first instance putting aside the metaphor introduced by the word τύπος—mould—we may understand the apostle to say that the disciples had obeyed the doctrine in which they had been instructed; and, in the second instance, taking up the figure, we may understand him to say that they had conformed themselves to the mould in which they had been cast, or to which they had been

delivered, as molten metal is poured into a mould by the founder. The blending of these two ideas together has caused the expression of each to be imperfect, and that of the whole sentence to be confused. Some critics prefer to the idea of a mould that of a model, or even of a picture; but, in this view I cannot see the propriety of the phrase *εἰς ὃν παρεδόθητε*—"to which ye were delivered." The general sentiment, however, is plain. The doctrine of the Gospel was adapted to exert a formative power on the moral character and life of believers, and to this influence the disciples at Rome had cordially yielded themselves.

I think a connexion is now to be traced between the 18th and the 20th verses, the 19th verse being thrown in between them after the manner of an introverted parallelism. I should read them together thus:—

VI. 18. Being emancipated from sin, ye have become servants of righteousness;
20. As, when ye were servants of sin, ye were estranged from righteousness.

That is to say, they were now as consistently Christian as they had before been consistently Pagan.

When, in ver. 19, the apostle says, as our English version literally has it, "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh," the critics are much perplexed by his words. There can be no doubt that, in using, as he does, a figure of speech drawn from slavery as then existing, he "speaks after the manner of men;" but, when he adds that he does this "because of the infirmity of their flesh," and so implies that but for this he might have used language more appropriate and effective, it is hard to understand him. I incline to think that he means no more than this: "I use a common metaphor for easier illustration."

The apostle now, as his third argument in support of his position, adduces the comparative advantages of sin and obedience. An alternate parallelism is here discernible.

VI. 21. Further, what fruit had ye formerly?
Of those things ye are now ashamed,
And the end of those things is perdition:
22. But now, being emancipated from sin and become servants to God,
Ye have your fruit unto holiness
And the end will be eternal happiness.

That this is the structure of the sentence is, I think, evident. As the "fruit" in the second case is "holiness," so the "fruit" in the first case must be depravity; the shameful viciousness matured in the course of an ungodly life being contrasted with the "beauty of holiness" as produced by a godly one. In ver. 21 θάνατος—death—cannot be understood of natural death, both because death was the specific penalty of Adam's sin, and because it is only in its metaphorical sense that death can have an import sufficiently large to denote the ultimate result of a life of sin. The direct antithesis of death thus understood is "eternal happiness."

The scheme of the entire passage, then, is as follows. It consists of three arguments; of which the first is divided into two clauses, between which the second and third, as subordinate, are inserted, thus constituting an introverted parallelism. This structure may be exhibited in the following manner:—

VI. 16. Know ye not that whomsoever ye willingly obey, ye are servants of him ye obey;
Whether servants of sin to perdition, or of obedience to justification?
17. Now God be thanked that ye were slaves of sin,
But ye have cordially moulded yourselves by the doctrine in which ye were instructed;
18. And being emancipated from sin have become servants of righteousness:
19. I use a common metaphor for easier illustration.
For as ye have yielded yourselves servants to uncleanness and iniquity by practising iniquity,
So ye now yield yourselves servants to righteousness by practising holiness.
20. As, when ye were servants to sin, ye were estranged from righteousness.
21. Further, what fruit had ye formerly?
Of those things ye are now ashamed,
And the end of those things is perdition:
22. But now, being emancipated from sin, and become servants to God,
Ye have your fruit unto holiness.
And the end will be eternal happiness.
23. Now the wages of sin is perdition,
But the gift of God is eternal happiness through Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Believer's release from the condemning power of the Law: chap. vii. ver. 1–6.

VII. 1. Do you not understand, brethren,
(For I speak to those who know [the principles of] law,)
That a law hath a claim over a person only so long as [the source of its obligation] existeth?
2. For example, a woman who hath an husband is bound by the conjugal law only as long as he liveth;
But, if her husband be dead, she is released from conjugal obligation.
3. So, if while her husband is living she be married to another man, she will be an adulteress;
But, if her husband be dead, she is released from the conjugal law,
So that she will not be an adulteress although she be married to another man.
4. After a similiar manner, my brethren, the law has become dead to you
By the death of Christ;
So that ye may be married to another,
To him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may live acceptably to God.
5. For when we were under the law, sinful affections which [were disapproved] by the law
Wrought in us deeds exposing us to condemnation;
6. But now [that we are in a state of favour,]
We are released from [the condemning power of] the law,
That being impotent by which we were subjected to it.
We thus serve God with a new spirit of freedom,
And not under the old liability to punishment.

In this passage it is plain that the apostle is still treating the subject of law, but much difficulty attends the interpretation of it. After examining what the commentators have said, I am inclined to suggest that an objection is here answered which might be raised to the apostle's admission in chap. vi. 14, that believers are not liable to legal penalties. Is not this inconsistent, it might be asked, with the permanent obligation of the moral law?

To this the apostle replies by a question relating to the obligation of law generally.

VII. 1. Do you not understand that a law hath dominion over a person so long *as he liveth?*

Such is the apostle's question according to a literal version, but there are strong reasons for not accepting this as his meaning. In the first place, it is not true in fact that law of any kind has necessarily dominion over a man as long as he lives. The law of a country, for example—as British

law—has not necessarily dominion over a person as long as he lives; since, by becoming a citizen of another state, any one may relieve himself of this obligation, and subject himself to a different one. In the next place, the illustration which the apostle immediately introduces is altogether at variance with such an idea. He speaks of a married woman, and lays stress upon the fact that she is *not* under the law of her husband so long as *she* lives, but so long as *he* lives. It is hard to think that there is an actual contradiction between the general principle which the apostle lays down and the very case by which he illustrates it.

In this emergency it has been proposed to read the question thus—"that a law hath dominion over a person as long as IT liveth?" This, however, is distasteful to the grammarians, who do not like the remoter noun to be made the nominative case to the verb. Nor, indeed, would this be any nearer to the fact; since it is obvious, according to the illustration above suggested, that a law may continue to exist and yet a person may be released from its obligation. I, therefore, upon my own responsibility, make another suggestion; namely, that a nominative case to the verb be understood, and that the question be read thus—"that a law hath dominion over a person so long as the source of its obligation existeth?" This reading would tally exactly with the illustration immediately drawn from conjugal life, and is not out of keeping with the nature of things, there being in all cases of law some source of its obligation. It is in this sense that I shall take the question, inserting the word *only* as evidently requisite to give complete expression to the apostle's idea. "Do you not understand, that a law hath dominion over a person only so long as the source of its obligation existeth?" In this question is suggested an idea evidently pertinent to the latent objection to which I have supposed the apostle to refer. "Is our being 'not under law,'" I suppose an objector to ask, "consistent with the necessary permanency of the moral law itself?" To this the apostle replies by asking the objector, whether he himself does not know cases in which the power of law terminates by the cessation of that wherein the source of its obligation lay; and he immediately adduces a case of this class in the instance of the married woman, who is bound by the law of the husband so long as he, the source of its obligation, lives, but no longer.

Having thus possessed ourselves of the apostle's idea, we may go on to the manner in which he applies it. "So likewise ye," says he; or, so likewise in your case as believers in Christ is there a similar change. But now occurs a remarkable alteration of his phraseology, which occasions fresh perplexity. What we should expect would be that the apostle would say the *law* is dead to you, as the supposed husband to the surviving wife; but what he really says is "*you* are dead to the law." The cause of this inversion of language it appears to me not easy to trace; I think, however, that it is an inversion of language only, and that the idea is substantially the same whether I am said to be dead to the law or the law to be dead to me. It is in this latter form that it is actually before us. The law in its condemning power is dead to believers. If we ask why should this be so? the apostle answers, "by the body—σῶμα—of Christ." It would seem that the word "body" must be taken in the sense of death, that death of expiation for sin which Christ endured in the body, and by which the law is so fully satisfied in all its demands that to believers in Jesus "there is no more condemnation." They are "justified by faith." To them the source of the law's condemning power—that is, their relation to it as their covenant of life—is destroyed.

The comparison drawn by the apostle seems to be this. The moral law may be regarded as man's husband. He is a husband whose rule is strict and unforgiving, so that, as a perpetual sinner, man (the wife) finds no possibility of rendering him acceptable service. To man as a believer in Christ, however, this husband is dead, his rigorous rule being put an end to by the death of Christ in expiation for sin. Hence it follows that there is no wrong done if man (the first husband being dead) is married to a second husband. To whom, however? The apostle answers, to Christ. But he also is dead? Yes, he died in expiation for sin, but he rose again, so that he may become our second husband; and we, being thus in a state of grace of which he is at once the founder and the administrator, "may bring forth fruit—καρποφορήσωμεν—unto God," or render him service, however imperfect, yet acceptable.

Having finished his comparison, the apostle proceeds in ver. 5, 6, to state the case in plain terms. "When we were under the law," says he—ἐν τῇ σαρκί, literally, "in the flesh;"

but the meaning is fixed by the context—"sinful affections which [were disapproved] by the law." Here it is evident that a verb is required to be supplied. The Greek phrase is literally—"sinful affections which by the law," the writer clearly thinking that the omitted verb would be readily supplied by the connexion. As suggested by the connexion, therefore, I supply the word *disapproved*—much preferring this to the word *excited*, which is generally supplied; and read, "When we were under the law, sinful affections which were disapproved by the law wrought in us deeds exposing us to condemnation." But, now, he goes on to say, we are delivered from the law, that is, from its condemning power, that being extinguished from which this power arose.

The apostle concludes by saying that believers now serve God—ἐν καινότητι πνεύματος καὶ οὐ παλαιότητι γράμματος—"in newness of spirit, and not in oldness of letter." In this very condensed phrase I think two ideas are combined. Believers in Christ serve God in a new manner, and not in the old one; and the manner of their service is new in this respect, that it is now "in spirit," or intention, whereas formerly it was "in letter," or strictly according to the precept. The service which believers in Jesus render to God is in intention perfect, although very imperfect in practice; but, under law, such an obedience could not have been accepted; it can be so only in a state of grace.

The Law not worthy of blame: chap. vii. ver. 7–12.

VII. 7. What, then, may be inferred from this statement?
Is the law worthy of blame?
By no means.
I should not, indeed, have become conscious of sin but by the [law.
For example, I should not have been conscious of lust, unless the law had said Thou shalt not lust.
8. But it was sin, which deriving its power to condemn from the commandment, excited in me affections [consciously evil and destructive].
For apart from the law sin was inoperative [to this effect].
9. For once, when I was ignorant of the law, I was happy;
But, when the commandment came home to me, sin became active and I wretched:
10. And the commandment, which was adapted to make me happy, I found to be a cause of misery;
11. Because sin, deriving its power from the commandment, led me on, and by it destroyed me.
12. This, however, only shows that the law is holy,
And the commandment holy, and just, and good.

That the apostle is here answering an objection is obvious, but it is not so easy to ascertain precisely what the objection is. Condensed even to abruptness is the question—ὁ νόμος ἁμαρτία; "Is the law sin?" It is plain that some phrase must be supplied; and what phrase may be best supplied must be gathered from the context. Most naturally—it might be said necessarily—we should look to something which the apostle has previously said as originating the objection he answers; but what has the apostle said? No answer appears to this question but in ver. 5, where he tells us that the sinful affections which were by the law exposed us to condemnation. Here, however, his language is equally condensed and abrupt—literally "sinful affections which . . . . by the law;" so that the verb which is wanted here must also be supplied by the context. What, then, must this verb be? I have suggested the word "disapprove," and I appeal to the context for the propriety of the suggestion. If this word, then, be adopted, what is the form assumed by the objection before us? It seems to me to be this—Is the law, then, to blame? Did it do me a wrong? And that this is really the form of the objection may further appear from this, that the ensuing reply is strictly adapted to it.

In the first place, the apostle admits that the law has really an enlightening power, which, however, is entirely to its credit: ver. 7 and 12.

VII. 7. I should not, indeed, have become conscious of sin but by the law;
For example, I should not have been conscious of lust, unless the law had said Thou shalt not lust:
12. This, however, only shows that the law is holy,
And that the commandment is holy, and just, and good.

Then, in the verses intervening (after the manner of an introverted parallelism), the apostle shows who is really chargeable with the mischief done. This is not the law, but sin; which word he uses as a personification of human corruption, and he proceeds to describe its mischievous activity. At the close of ver. 8, he lays down a general principle which lies at the basis of his argument: that, "apart from the law, sin is dead," or rather, inoperative. Now it is plain that this cannot be meant absolutely; since, whether the law had or had not been given, the corruption of man's heart

would have equally and similarly exerted itself. The meaning must be that, apart from the law, corruption, however active in fact, would have entailed no sense either of guilt, or of condemnation. From this evident truth the apostle goes on to say, that sin, finding in the law an instrument for such mischief, wrought all manner of evil affections with this result.

In ver. 9 the apostle gives a further illustration of his meaning. "Once," that is, when he was "without the law" —or in ignorance of it—he was happy, being quite uninformed of his liability to punishment; but, "when the commandment came home to him"—when the full knowledge of it flashed upon him—sin, which had before been "dead," or inoperative to condemnation, became active, and he in his turn became wretched under the conviction of his danger. And thus he found himself made miserable by a law which was in itself adapted and designed to make him happy; because his own corruption led him into sin, and so turned to fatal effect the opportunity of his perdition afforded by the law.

As to the question which is raised by the commentators, whether Paul is speaking in his own person or in the person of a Jew, I entirely agree with those who hold that the apostle is describing his own experience in his conversion to God, and who assign the three days of his blindness at Damascus as the period when he passed through it.

Sin the true cause of Misery: chap. vii. 13.

The apostle here feels himself open to the retort that, at any rate, that which was good in its nature and intention had become a source of misery to him; but even this he denies. No, says he, not the law, otherwise than accidentally. The true cause of my misery was sin. So that what I really learnt by the commandment was that sin is of a nature exceedingly malignant, since it brought about my misery by that which is divinely good.

VII. 13. That which is good, then, has become a cause of misery to me?
By no means.
[Not the law,] but sin [was the true cause of my misery];
So that sin shows its true character:
By that which is good it makes me miserable;
So that by means of the commandment sin exhibits its extreme malignity.

The Believer's torment by Sin, and its mitigations:
chap. vii. 14 to viii. 9.

VII. 14. [And sin still makes me miserable.]
For we know that the law requires holiness;
I, however, am prone to evil, enslaved by sin,
15. So that what I practise I do not approve.
For I do not perform that which I prefer,
But I do that which I hate.
16. If, however, I do not prefer the evil which I do, I acquiesce in the goodness of the law;
17. And it is not so much I who do it as sin dwelling in me.
18. I acknowledge that in me, as unrenewed, a holy impulse does not dwell:
For although I prefer what is holy, I cannot perform it.
19. For I do not do good, which I prefer;
But I do evil, which I do not prefer.
20. If, however, I do not prefer what I do,
It is not so much I who do it as sin dwelling in me.
21. On the other hand, I detect a force opposing me when I desire to do good,
Because evil prevails over me.
22. For I delight in the divine impulse actuating my renewed man;
23. But I detect another force in my corrupt nature thwarting the impulse of my renewed nature,
And enslaving me to the [sinful] force in my corrupt nature.
24. O wretched man that I am!
Who will release me from this dead carcase?
25. I thank God [that], through Jesus Christ our Lord, [there is relief].
Thus I personally [act a twofold part.]
In my renewed nature I am actuated by a holy impulse,
But in my corrupt nature by a sinful impulse.
VIII. 1. This struggle doth not entail condemnation on those who believe in Christ Jesus.
2. And the power of holiness, which tendeth to happiness through Christ Jesus,
Hath released me from the power of sin, which tendeth to perdition.
3. For the thing which was impracticable by the law,
Because it was powerless through corruption,
God [hath accomplished]:
Having sent his own Son
In the nature of sinful man,
And to make expiation for sin,
He hath punished sin in human nature.
4. So that the precepts of the law may be fulfilled by us [who believe in him],
And walk, not corruptly, but holily.

VIII. 5. For those who are corrupt prefer corrupt things,
And those who are holy prefer holy things.
6. Now the preference of corrupt things is perdition,
And the preference of holy things is happiness and joy.
7. Because the preference of corrupt things is enmity towards God;
For it is not conformable to the law of God,
Neither, indeed, can it be so.
8. Those, therefore, who are corrupt cannot be pleasing to God.
9. You, however, are not corrupt but holy,
Since the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.
Now if any one have not the Spirit of Christ he is not his.

The portion here presented to the reader is long, but it has a unity of subject which requires it to be taken as a whole, the division between chapters vii. and viii. being exceedingly infelicitous. The passage easily divides itself into two parts; but the two are, in chap. vii. 25, dove-tailed together with a degree of parallelistic art which will hereafter come more particularly under our notice.

We have evidently before us a remarkably interesting and important passage; but it is one of unusually difficult interpretation, in consequence, partly, of the widely different interpretations proposed. Among commentators, some affirm positively that Paul is here describing the experience of an unregenerate man; others, with equal positivity, that he is describing that of a genuine Christian. On this question it will be proper in the outset to define our own view.

Some scope is certainly given for both these opinions, by the great force of the expressions which are employed on both sides. One asks, how can a true Christian be—*σάρκινος, πεπραμένος ὑπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν*—"unholy, enslaved by sin?" and another, how can unregenerate man say, *συνήδομαι τῷ νομῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ*—"I delight in the law of God," or "in the divine impulse" of a renewed nature? In this strait I side with those who take the latter class of terms as the least capable of modification, and therefore as the most critical and decisive. Since it *is* possible to harmonize all that he says with the experience of the regenerate, but it is *not* possible to harmonize it all with the experience of the unregenerate, I take the apostle to be speaking of a regenerate man.

The next thing which it is important for us to ascertain, is the connexion of this passage with that which precedes it, and the true course of the apostle's thought. For this pur-

pose I observe that, in the preceding verses, he had been exhibiting *sin* as the cause of his wretchedness by exposing him to the condemnation of an equitable and benevolent law, ver. 8–11. In continuation of this thought he now adds that sin still makes him wretched; and this is the fact which he proceeds to illustrate by a detailed exhibition of his experience.

To this subject the apostle devotes the whole remainder (with a single exception to be noticed presently) of the 7th chapter, and the passage divides itself into two portions. The first is a general statement of the fact, and the second is a specific illustration of it. The latter is given in ver. 15–17, and repeated in ver. 19, 20; these two portions being withdrawn, the continuity of the argument is unbroken till the reader comes to ver. 24, 25. In these two verses as they now stand there is manifest confusion, but on the principles of parallelism the whole is reducible to order. The case is simply, that the apostle, *more suo*, links the second part of his subject—the mitigations of the believer's misery, which he treats in the beginning of the 8th chapter—with the first, by breaking in upon the concluding clause of it. If the reader will put the latter part of ver. 25 immediately after ver. 23, everything will be in its natural order.

VII. 22. For I delight in the divine impulse actuating my renewed man;
23. But I detect another force in my corrupt nature thwarting the impulse of my renewed nature,
And enslaving me to the [sinful] force in my corrupt nature.
25. Thus I personally [act a twofold part].
In my renewed nature I am actuated by a holy impulse,
But in my corrupt nature by a sinful impulse.
24. O wretched man that I am!
Who will deliver me from this dead carcase?
25. I thank God [that], through Jesus Christ our Lord, [there is relief].

We have now had too many instances of this mode of composition to be surprised at it. It may be observed, however, that the tone of feeling in ver. 23 is more congruous with the exclamation: "O wretched man that I am!" than the calmer statement of ver. 25.

Looking at this passage in detail, we may notice in the first place the very strong expressions—*σάρκινος*, *πεπραμένος ὑπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν*—"unholy, enslaved by sin." The inter-

pretation of them is not easy. If the phrases were taken as constituting a complete description of character, assuredly they could be understood only of an unregenerate man; but it is at once fair and necessary to combine them with, and to qualify them by, that which is afterwards introduced, especially in ver. 22—*συνήδομαι τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ θεοῦ κατὰ τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον*—"I delight in the law of God, after the inward man"—or "in the divine impulse actuating the renewed man": see also ver. 24 and 25. The case, then, is that of a person who delights in the law of God and with the mind serves it, but who is *at the same time* "unholy, enslaved by sin." Consequently, there must be some extent to which these two features can be practically combined, and to this extent only can the latter be intended. The phrase "sold under sin" is clearly metaphorical, and denotes simply a state of bondage, persons being customarily, in a natural sense, *sold* into slavery. The meaning of the whole phrase, however, is more fully brought out by the illustration in detail, which immediately follows in ver. 15–17; and again in ver. 19, 20.

The fact stated by the apostle on the part of a regenerate person is, that there is a certain contrariety between his desires and his actions, the one being holy the other sinful; ver. 15 and 19. This statement cannot be taken as absolute, inasmuch as our desires are the natural impulses of our actions, and our actions must be taken to be the carrying out of our desires; but in a qualified sense it may be verified. It is not merely that a purpose which the conscience may approve the feelings may frustrate; but that a purpose really and supremely cherished may also be frustrated by the influence of opposing feelings, which for the moment obtain a prevalence. Neither can the fact stated by the apostle be received as a universal one, since that would be wholly inconsistent with genuine piety; but the apostle must be understood to say that a regenerate person is, not always but sometimes, frustrated in carrying out his supreme desire, doing what he hates and hating what he does.

To this statement, that he hates the evil that he does and loves the good which he sometimes fails to do, the apostle attaches the qualification that the result is owing, not properly to himself, but to sin dwelling in him; ver. 16, 17, 20. Our moral self clearly consists of our supreme and

most cherished desires; and, in cases in which these fail of a practical power, some other cause must be looked for. It is sin that dwelleth in us. The apostle makes this remark, not with a view of escaping responsibility (as is afterwards apparent, see ver. 25), but in order to trace this wretchedness to its source, sin.

These two portions may be arranged as an alternate parallelism, in the following manner:—

VII. 15. For I do not perform that which I prefer,
But I do that which I hate.
16. If, however, I do not prefer the evil which I do, I acquiesce in the goodness of the law;
And it is not so much I who do it as sin dwelling in me.
19. For I do not do good, which I prefer,
But I do evil, which I do not prefer.
20. If, however, I do that which I do not prefer,
It is not so much I who do it as sin dwelling in me.

It is not easy to assign a reason for this double statement. The change in the phraseology, it is true, slight as it is, makes some advance in the sentiment; but perhaps the principal reason was that the apostle wished to assert more strongly what might to some appear incredible.

In ver. 18 the apostle proceeds to answer the question, How can these things be? And his answer is, literally—"In me, that is, in my flesh, holiness dwelleth not." Much importance attaches here to the word "flesh." It is to be taken, of course, figuratively, as denoting the remnant of corruption in the regenerate, as where the same apostle speaks of flesh and spirit as "contrary the one to the other." In his flesh, that is, in him as unrenewed, holiness dwelt not; all his tendencies and impulses were towards evil; and hence, although to prefer good was the dictate of his renewed nature, in its performance he was often frustrated.

Of this state of things the apostle in ver. 21–23 gives a further illustration. "I detect—νόμος—a law," ver. 21. The meaning of the word "law" must be carefully attended to. It is here used, not in the sense of a rule, but in that of a force; after the manner in which any force acting with the constancy and regularity of law is familiarly called a law—the law of gravitation, for example. And the meaning is, "I detect a force," or more fully, an opposing force, so that when I prefer good evil prevails.

In the same manner, when in ver. 22 the apostle says, "I

delight—τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ—in the *law* of God," the antithetic phrase in ver. 21 and 23 determines the meaning to a holy force, or the impulse of the regenerate nature. We are not to understand by ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος—"the inward man," either our intelligent nature or our conscience, but the man regenerate. And so by μέλη and νοῦς, the "members" and "the mind," in ver. 23, we must understand the flesh and the spirit, or the old and the new man. The war between these two is constant, the "captivity" occasional.

In ver. 25 the apostle winds up his statement as follows: —αὐτὸς ἐγώ, "I myself." This emphatic use of the personal pronoun seems to throw us back on the distinction between himself and sin that dwelt in him, made in ver. 17 and 20; and its design is probably to obviate an impression that he intended by that distinction to warrant the believer in evading a personal responsibility. By the νοῦς and the σάρξ, the "mind" and the "flesh," are clearly to be understood the regenerate and unregenerate parts of a believer's nature. I have supplied a clause in order to complete the sense.

Under the experience of the torture which sin thus brought upon him, Paul makes the believer exclaim "O wretched man that I am! who will release me from this dead carcase?" ver. 24. He compares the believer to a living man to whom a dead body is chained; certainly a very expressive metaphor.

The illustration of the tormenting influence of sin being thus completed, the mitigations of it are exhibited. This part of the subject is introduced by a kind of answer to the agonizing question: "Who will release me from this dead carcase?" The response is, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord;" or, more completely, "I thank God that, through Jesus Christ our Lord, this torment inflicted by sin is not without relief."

Here is another instance of parallelistic art; the lines which form the conclusion of the first part forming also a most appropriate commencement to the second, and so linking them both together:—

VII. 24. O wretched man that I am!
Who will deliver me from this dead carcase?
25. I thank God [that], through Jesus Christ our Lord, [there is relief.]
VIII. 1. This struggle doth not entail condemnation on those who believe in Christ Jesus.

VIII. 2. And the power of holiness, which tendeth to happiness through Christ Jesus,
Hath released me from the power of sin, which tendeth to perdition.

The reader will perceive that I have omitted the clause which, in the authorized version, forms the latter part of ver. 1. All I have occasion to say on this matter is that I have followed the guidance of Tischendorf; to which, however, I may add that, as the same clause occurs in ver. 4, its omission here cannot be material to the sense.

The apostle finds the torment which the believer suffers by sin to be mitigated by two considerations. The first of these is, that the struggle, though severe, does not at the worst entail condemnation; believers in Jesus having been justified by faith, and so having a peace with God which cannot be destroyed: chap. viii. 1.

The second source of mitigation is that, although sin torments a believer, through grace it does not reign over him; chap. viii. 2. The phraseology of this verse is somewhat difficult. The former and the latter parts are evidently antithetical, so that the phrase *νόμος τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς*—"the law (or rather, a law) of the spirit of life" is verbally opposed to *ὁ νόμος τῆς ἁμαρτίας καὶ τοῦ θανάτου*—"the law of sin and death." The apostle seems to refer to the two forces already noticed as operating on the believer: the one he calls "a law of the spirit," or a force tending to holiness, as the other is "the law of sin," or a force tending to sin; and "a law of life," or a force tending to happiness, as the law of sin is "a law of death," or a force tending to misery. The apostle's general assertion is that, in a believer, the vital power of holiness has broken the dominion, although it has not put an end to the torment, of sin. Of this assertion he assigns no evidence here; but he seems to bring forward the fact from the antecedent portion of the passage, as sufficiently demonstrated by what he has there said concerning the believer's spiritual conflict.

In ver. 3 and 4 he assigns the evangelical foundation of these positions. In order to a correct understanding of ver. 3 a stop must be placed after the word "God," and a phrase must be inserted to complete the sense, thus:—

VIII. 3. For the thing which was impracticable by the law,
Because it was powerless through corruption,
God [hath accomplished].
Having sent his own Son
In the nature of sinful man,
And to make expiation for sin,
He hath punished sin in human nature:
4. So that the precepts of the law may be fulfilled by us [who believe in him],
And walk not corruptly, but holily.

"What the law could not do" was, of course, to provide for the combined justification and sanctification of a sinner, a purpose for which it was of necessity powerless through human iniquity. But this God had effected; since, by "sending his own Son in the nature of sinful man, and to make expiation for sin," he *κατέκρινεν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐν τῇ σαρκί*—"punished sin in the flesh." There can be no doubt that the apostle here refers to the one sacrifice of Christ in expiation for human guilt; and when he says that God thus "punished sin in the flesh," he means that God thus carried out in human nature the sentence of the law against sin.

The effect of this divine act of expiation is expressed in ver. 4. "So that the precepts of the law may be fulfilled by us who believe in Jesus, and who walk not corruptly, but holily." The idea is here twofold, as the aspects of Christian character are twofold. "By us" who believe, and who also "walk not corruptly, but holily," "the precepts of the law are fulfilled" by means of the expiation of Christ. And this in two ways. First, legally; the righteousness of Christ being imputed to us for our justification: secondly, morally; it being the aim of the regenerate man to keep the law perfectly—an aim now partially, and hereafter to be completely, attained.

From ver. 5 to 8 the apostle is occupied with a phrase which he has just used in speaking of those who walk *κατὰ σαρκὰ* and *κατὰ πνεῦμα*, "after the flesh" and "after the spirit." His idea in ver. 5 is that the prevailing course of life is determined by a corresponding principle from which it springs. And he goes on to say, in ver. 6, that these states of heart are sources respectively of happiness and misery—*θάνατος* and *ζωή*, "death" and "life." In ver. 7 he assigns the reason for this, that the love of carnal things is "enmity towards God;" the proof that it is so being that this state of

heart is totally out of conformity with God's law, and utterly irreconcilable with it. Hence it follows (ver. 8) that those who live a carnal life cannot be pleasing to God, or do anything acceptable to him, the entire principle of their conduct, that from which the whole of it springs and by which the whole of it is characterized, being of the nature of hostility to him. From this statement we are, of course, to infer the opposite, which the apostle doubtless meant although he has not expressed it; namely, that those who are holy are in a state of friendship with God, their affections being conformable to his law, so that they can "please God," or render to him service acceptable through Jesus Christ.

The practical bearing of all this is on the assertion made by the apostle in ver. 4, that, in order to fulfil the precepts of the law, holy living must be added to faith.

VIII. 5. For those who are corrupt prefer corrupt things,
And those who are holy prefer holy things:
6. Now the preference of corrupt things is perdition,
And the preference of holy things is happiness and joy.
7. Because the preference of corrupt things is enmity towards God:
For it is not conformable to the law of God,
Neither, indeed, can it be so.
8. Those, therefore, who are corrupt, cannot be pleasing to God.

In ver. 9 the apostle makes an evident but easy personal transition, wherein he refers to his Christian hope of the disciples at Rome in particular. "But ye, I trust, are not corrupt, but holy." The next clause to this is rendered obscure by the use in the English version of the phrase, "if so be." It is evident that what is here required is not a condition concealed but a condition manifest, on which the apostle relies to justify his hope; and consequently the passage should be read, "But ye, I trust, are not corrupt, but holy, *since* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." The apostle is doubtless referring to the well-known holy living of the disciples at Rome, which he refers to the operation of the Holy Spirit. The passage is remarkable as containing the first mention of the Holy Spirit made in this Epistle: this also being not a doctrinal but a practical and experimental one, implying doctrine as well known.

VIII. 9. You, however, are not corrupt, but holy,
Since the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.
Now, if any one have not the Spirit of Christ, he is not his.

The last line contains a solemn and not unnecessary warning of a general kind. By the concluding phrase "he is not his," the apostle means he is not a believer in Christ, however loudly he may profess to be so; holiness being an indispensable fruit and accompaniment of faith.

DIDACTIC PORTION, Part II.: chap. ix. to chap. xv. 7.

Section I.—*Of Justification:* chaps. ix. x., xi.

IX. 1. I affirm truly as a Christian,
I do not lie,
The Holy Spirit also bearing me inward witness,
2. That I suffer much grief, and incessant heartfelt sorrow,
3. [If it were possible] I could wish myself to be separated from Christ for them,
On account of my brethren, my natural kinsmen.
4. They are descendants of Israel:
To them pertain the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants,
And the giving of the law, and the ritual, and the promises:
5. Their progenitors are the patriarchs,
And descended from them is the Christ,
Who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.
6. Not that it is possible that the promise of God should have failed;
But they are not all Israel [spiritually] who are descended from Israel,
7. As not all were heirs [naturally] because they were children of Abraham.
For [the promise was in these terms]—
Thy seed by Isaac shall be preferred:
8. That is, not the natural children [of Abraham] are the children intended by God;
But the children by promise are reckoned as the seed.
9. For [respecting the birth of Isaac] there was this promise—
In due season I will come, and by Sarah there shall be a son.
10. Nor is this the only [example of sovereignty].
When Rebecca had conceived by one, by our father Isaac—
11. And this was said when the children were not yet born,
And when they had done neither good nor evil;
That the discriminating purpose of God might stand,
Not of merit, but of sovereignty:
12. It was said to her, The elder shall serve the younger.
13. As it is written,
I have preferred Jacob, and rejected Esau.
14. Do we then say that God is unrighteous in dealing thus?
By no means:

IX. 15. For to Moses he saith—
I will show mercy where I will show mercy,
And I will compassionate those whom I will compassionate.
16. In this respect, therefore, it is not of him that willeth or of him that striveth,
But of God who is pleased to show mercy.
17. The Scripture saith also concerning Pharaoh—
For this very purpose I have raised thee up, that I might show my power towards thee,
And that my glory might be proclaimed in all the earth.
18. Thus, not only whom he will he treateth kindly,
But whom he will he treateth severely.
19. Thou wilt say, then, to me, Why doth he still lay blame?
For who hath frustrated his purpose?
20. Nay, O man:
Who art thou that thou shouldest dispute with God?
The moulded vessel doth not say to the moulder, Why hast thou made me thus?
21. Or hath not the potter power over the clay,
Of the same mass to make one vessel for a use more honourable, and one for a use less honourable?
22. And what if God,
Having determined to show his wrath,
And to display his power,
Endured with much long-suffering vessels of wrath fitted to destruction,
[And ultimately visited them with signal judgment:
Is this to be complained of?]
23. And [what if God,
Having determined] to display his richest grace on vessels of mercy whom he had appointed unto glory,
24. Even on us whom he hath called, not Jews only but Gentiles,
[Bestowed on them all spiritual blessings through Christ Jesus:
Is this to be complained of?]
25. As he saith by Hosea:
I will call them my people which were not my people,
And her beloved who was not beloved:
26. And it shall be in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people,
There they shall be called the sons of the living God.
27. Isaiah also crieth concerning Israel—
Although the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea,
A remnant only shall be delivered:
28. For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness,
Because he will make a brief reckoning with the land.
29. Isaiah also had previously said [concerning Judah],
Except the Lord of hosts had left us a seed,
We had been as Sodom, and had resembled Gomorrha.
30. What, then, are the facts?
The Gentiles, who did not seek after justification, have attained it;

IX. 31. While Israel, who did seek after justification, have not attained it.
32. And what is the reason?
[On the one hand, the Gentiles accepted] justification by faith;
[On the other], Israel sought it not by faith, but by works.
Thus they stumbled at the stumbling-block,
33. As it is written:
Behold I lay in Zion a stumbling-block and rock of offence,
But whosoever trusteth in him shall not be confounded.
X. 1. Brethren, my heartfelt desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.
2. For I acknowledge that they are zealously devout,
Although they are not guided by correct knowledge.
3. For, being unacquainted with God's method of justification,
And being bent on making good their own method of justification,
To God's method of justification they have not submitted themselves.
4. Now Christ is the scope of the ritual law in its relation to justification,
[And he is so for the justification] of every one who trusteth in him.
5. For Moses describeth the method of justification by the ritual law thus—
The man that doeth these things shall live by them.
6. But he elsewhere describeth a method of justification which is by faith, thus:
Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven?
That is, to bring Christ down from above:
7. Or who shall descend into the abyss?
That is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.
8. But how does he proceed? He saith—
The thing required is near thee,
In thy mouth, and in thy mind.
Now this describeth the method of justification by faith,
Which we publish;
9. That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus,
And shalt believe with thy mind that God hath raised him from the dead,
Thou shalt be saved.
10. For with the mind man believeth to justification,
And with the mouth he maketh confession to salvation.
11. Now the Scripture saith Whosoever believeth on him shall not be put to shame:
12. There is, therefore, no difference between the Jew and the Gentile,
For the same Lord over all is merciful to all who confess him.
13. [Again it is said] Whosoever shall confess the name of the Lord shall be saved.

X. 14. But how shall they confess him on whom they have not believed?
And how shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard?
And how shall they hear unless one publish the glad tidings?
15. And how shall any publish it unless they be sent?
As it is written:
How beautiful are the feet of those who publish good news of peace,
Who bring glad tidings of good things!
16. Not all [the Gentiles], however, have obeyed the glad tidings.
[I admit this]:
For [to them may be applied what] Isaiah saith,
Lord, who hath believed our report?
17. So, then, faith pre-supposeth hearing the glad tidings,
And hearing the glad tidings is by the appointment of God.
18. But I reply, Have they not all heard it?
Yes, verily: [for to this may be applied the language]—
Their sound went out into all the earth,
And their words to the end of the world.
19. I now ask, did not Israel always know that things would be thus?
First Moses saith,
I will excite you to emulation by those who are not my people,
And by an idolatrous nation will I provoke you.
20. But Isaiah groweth bolder, and saith,
I have been found by those who did not seek me,
I have manifested myself to those who did not inquire after me.
21. While concerning Israel he saith,
The whole day I have stretched out my hands
To a people disobedient and refractory.
XI. 1. I ask, then,
Hath God cast away his whole people?
By no means.
For I myself am an Israelite,
Of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.
2. God hath not cast away his chosen people.
Do you not recollect what the Scripture containeth concerning Elijah,
How he pleadeth with God concerning Israel, saying,
3. Lord, they have killed thy prophets,
And overthrown thine altars;
And I alone am left,
And they seek my life?
4. But what did the divine oracle reply to him?
I have reserved to myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.
5. So at the present time there is a remnant according to God's gracious choice.

XI. 6. Now, if the inheritance of spiritual blessings be by grace,
then it is not of works;
Otherwise grace is no more grace:
But, if it is by works, then it is not by grace,
Otherwise works are no more works.
7. What, then, is the fact?
Not all Israel have obtained the justification sought for;
But the chosen people have obtained it,
And the rest have been blinded,
8. (According as it is written:
God hath given them the spirit of slumber,
Eyes not adapted to see,
And ears not fitted to hear.)
Until this day.
9. David also saith—
Let their table be made a snare and a trap,
And a stumbling-block and a recompense to them:
10. Let their eyes be darkened that they may not see,
And bow down their back alway.
11. I now ask, Have Israel so stumbled that they will fall?
By no means.
On the other hand, by occasion of their stumbling salvation
is published to the Gentiles;
So that this may excite them to emulation.
12. And if their adversity thus promote the happiness of the
world,
[How much more would their prosperity?]
And if their impoverishment increase the wealth of the
world,
How much more would their abundance?
13. Now I speak thus to you Gentiles, both because I am the
apostle of the Gentiles,
I claim the right of my office,
14. And in order that I may provoke my kinsmen to emulation,
And may save some of them.
15. And if their rejection lead to the conversion of the world,
What would their restoration be but a resurrection of the
dead?
16. Now, if the corn of the firstfruit be holy, so is the dough;
And if the root be holy, so are the branches.
17. And if some of the branches have been broken off,
And thou, a wild olive, hast been grafted in among them,
And with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive
tree,
18. Glory not over the [broken] branches:
Or, if thou glory, [remember thy position;]
Not thou bearest the root, but the root thee.
19. Thou wilt say, however,
The branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.
20. True: but because of unbelief they were broken off,
And thou holdest thy privilege by faith.
Be not, therefore, elated,
But be careful:

XI. 21. For, since God spared not the natural branches,
Take heed lest he also spare not thee.
22. Recognize herein both the kindness and the severity of God:
Towards those who have stumbled severity;
But towards thee the kindness of God,
If thou continue [by faith] in the privilege conferred;
Otherwise thou also wilt be cut off.
23. And they also, if they abide not in unbelief, shall be grafted in again,
For God is able to graft them in again.
24. For, if thou wert cut out of the naturally-wild olive tree,
And wert grafted contrary to nature into the good olive tree,
How much more easily shall the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?
25. For I would not, brethren, that ye should be uninformed of this mystery,
Lest ye should have a high conceit of yourselves,
That temporary blindness hath occurred to Israel,
Until the fulness of the Gentiles is come in;
26. And then all Israel shall be saved.
As it is written:
There shall come out of Zion a deliverer,
And he shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:
27. For this is my covenant with them,
When I shall take away their sins.
28. As to spiritual privileges they are treated as enemies for your sakes;
But as to their interest in God's favour they are still beloved for the fathers' sakes.
29. For the gifts and calling of God are irreversible.
30. As, in times past, ye were disobedient to God,
But have now obtained mercy by occasion of their disobedience;
31. They have, by occasion of the mercy shown to you, become disobedient;
So that they also become fit objects of mercy.
32. Thus God has found all to be disobedient,
So that all will be equally indebted to his grace.
33. O the unfathomable riches both of the wisdom and skilfulness of God!
How unsearchable are his judgments,
And his ways past finding out!
34. For who hath known the mind of the Lord?
Or who hath been his counsellor?
35. Or who hath first given to him that it may be repaid him again?
36. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things:
To whom be glory for ever. Amen.

The apostle here evidently enters on a new branch of his subject; and he enters on it with so much abruptness that

the early verses of chap. ix. give no indication of the topics which he is about to treat. His object and his course of thought, indeed, are scarcely to be traced without a careful perusal of the entire three chapters, in which there is a perfect unity and a regular order.

Supposing these three chapters to be now read, it is obvious that the apostle is still treating of God's method of justification, only not, as before, doctrinally and experimentally, but historically, or under the aspect of its actual reception by mankind. This was peculiar and striking, and was adapted to give rise to an objection which he thought it important to obviate.

The case was this. The apostle had shown God's method of justification to be both adapted and intended for mankind at large—that is, according to the great division of mankind then prevalent, for Jews and Gentiles (chap. iii. 29, 30). The reception of this doctrine in the world, however, had not been what might have been expected—a general acceptance by the Jews at large with a frank accession from the Gentiles; on the contrary, it was welcomed by many more Gentiles than Jews, by the latter of whom, indeed, it was almost universally rejected. Might not this be turned into an argument against the doctrine itself?

It is in view of this state of things and of its possible bearing, that the apostle, without previously naming them, proceeds to speak. And his discourse advances in the order following:—

In the first place we have a solemn expression of his profound regret on account of Jewish unbelief, chap. ix., ver. 1–5.

We have then an intimation that the prevailing unbelief of the Jews did not violate any promise of God, whose favours had always and characteristically been bestowed on Israel in a discriminating manner, chap. ix. 6–13; and ver. 27–29.

Between these two passages, with the usual parallelistic art, is inserted an argumentative reply to two objections, started at ver. 14 and 19.

At ver. 30 the apostle takes another step in his argument, and traces the opposite results which he is contemplating to their respective causes. The treatment of this topic continues through the whole of the 10th chapter, the former part of it

relating to notices of justification by faith discoverable in the Jewish Scriptures, and the latter part of it (from ver. 12) to the preaching of the Gospel to both Jew and Gentile.

In chap. xi., the apostle treats of the aspect of Jewish unbelief, first (ver. 1) in relation to the covenant of God; then (from ver. 11) in relation to the conversion of the Gentiles; and finally (from ver. 25) in relation to the ultimate conversion of the Jews.

After this general survey, I shall take up in order the several important topics which this interesting passage treats of.

The Apostle's ardent Love for his Brethren: chap. ix. 1–5.

On the face of it this passage has one great difficulty, arising from the phrase, "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ." Understanding this—*ἀνάθεμα ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ*—of an eternal separation from Christ, one cannot but ask, Is such a thing possible? And, if it were, could such a wish be right? And the force of these questions is so great as to have led many critics to suggest different meanings: *e. g.*, "I was once accursed"—"I *did* wish myself accursed"—"I could wish myself devoted." None of these are satisfactory, however, inasmuch as they fail to justify the deep solemnity of the first verse. Mr. Granville Penn thinks that the tone of the first verse is sufficiently sustained by the rendering—"for I boasted that I was set apart by Christ for my brethren." Without denying the critical possibility of this rendering, it is enough to object to it that it assumes two facts of which there is no proof. The first is that Paul was set apart by Christ with a special view to the conversion of the Jews; and the second that he boasted of such a destination. The contrary of both these assumptions seems to have been the truth. Paul was emphatically "the apostle of the Gentiles:" see Acts xxvi. 17; Rom. xi. 13. For myself, I am best pleased with the suggestion of Olshausen that, after the manner of a similar sentence in Gal. iv. 15—"I bear you record that, *if it had been possible*, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and given them to me"—we may insert the phrase, "if it were possible," and so read, "If it were possible, I could wish that myself were separated from Christ for my brethren," &c. This phrase, "If it were

possible," seems to contain also the further idea, "if it were *right*." We have then only a vehement expression of intense affection, suggesting the use of hyperbolical language, and fully justifying the extraordinary solemnity of the manner in which it is introduced.

IX. 1. I affirm truly as a Christian,
I do not lie,
The Holy Spirit also bearing me inward witness,
2. That I suffer much grief, and incessant heartfelt sorrow,
3. [If it were possible] I could wish myself to be separated from Christ for them,
On account of my brethren, my natural kinsmen.

Some reasons must be supposed to exist, however, for this unusual force of expression. They were probably such as these: that the apostle, he being himself an apostate from Judaism, and having, moreover, been bitterly persecuted by the Jews, might have been supposed to regard his nation with little favour, if not to have been gratified by their unbelief. The ardour of his love for them was, indeed, a beautiful display of the power of Christianity.

In ver. 4, 5, the apostle enumerates several prerogatives peculiarly characterizing the Jewish nation; in contemplating which it will be necessary to divest ourselves of all sympathy with the contempt into which this people have long sunk, and to view them from the ancient, that is, from the apostolic stand-point. As a nation, and as compared with other nations, the Jews were in all these particulars highly distinguished.

1. They were "the descendants of Israel." Israel was a name of distinguished honour: Gen. xxxii. 28. It signified "a prince of God;" and hence the whole race was called "a royal generation."

2. To them pertained "the adoption." A reference is here had, probably, to Exodus iv. 22: "Israel is my son, even my first-born."

3. And "the glory." This word seems to refer to the visible glory of God, the Shechinah, by which, both in the wilderness and in the temple, God gave token of his presence.

4. And "the covenants." Here is intended the covenant of circumcision; which is spoken of in the plural, as first made with Abraham, and afterwards renewed with Isaac and Jacob.

5. And "the giving of the law." The giving of the law on Mount Sinai is no doubt referred to; an event quite unique and unparalleled in the history of the race. The manner in which Moses speaks of it may be seen in Deut. iv. 32–36.

6. And "the ritual." The apostle here speaks of the Hebrew ritual, which was at once more splendid and more significant than any other service of the kind in the world. It was of divine institution, and its typical use was of great importance.

7. And "the promises." In addition to the leading promise of the land of Canaan, many important secular promises are found in Levit. xxvi. and Deut. xxviii.: the greatest of all the promises, however, was undoubtedly that of the Messiah.

8. "Their progenitors were the patriarchs." These were, compared with Pagan heroes, illustrious men; and they were men holding a remarkable position in the dispensations of God.

9. From them descended "the Christ." This was a pre-eminent honour, and one tending to endear the name of a Jew to every Christian.

Both in themselves, and especially as compared with the characteristics of other nations, these were high distinctions; and it was thus a matter of especial regret to the apostle that such a people should reject what was pre-eminently their own, and from such a height in the favour of God sink into such depths of wrath.

The effectual Cause of the reception of the Gospel in the World: chap. ix. 6–29.

The Unbelief of the Jews not contrary to the Promises of God: chap. ix. 6–13, and 27–29.

The apostle, having admitted the prevalent unbelief of the Jews as a fact and deplored it as a calamity, now proceeds to vindicate the divine conduct in relation to it. To a superficial observer it might seem that such an issue must be dishonourable to him. In Gen. xvii. 7, there stands a promise in these terms—"I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee:" and yet the bulk of the nation are now rejected because of their unbelief. God, then, has not kept his word.

The passage in which the apostle makes his answer to this is the following :—

IX. 6. Not that it is possible that the promise of God should have failed.
For they are not all Israel [spiritually] who are descended from Israel.
7. As not all were heirs [naturally] because they were children of Abraham.
For [the promise was in these terms] :
Thy seed by Isaac shall be preferred.
8. That is, not the natural children [of Abraham] are those intended by God,
But the children by promise are reckoned as the seed :
9. For [respecting the birth of Isaac] there was this promise—
In due season I will come, and by Sarah there shall be a son.
10. Nor is this the only [example of sovereignty].
When Rebecca had conceived by one, by our father Isaac—
11. And this was said when the children were not yet born,
And when they had done neither good nor evil,
In order that the discriminating purpose of God might stand,
Not of merit, but of sovereignty.
12. It was said to her,
The elder shall serve the younger.
13. As it is written—
I have preferred Jacob, and rejected Esau.
27. Isaiah also crieth concerning Israel—
Although the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea,
A remnant only shall be delivered ;
28. For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness,
Because he will make a brief reckoning with the land.
29. Isaiah also had previously said [respecting Judah],
Except the Lord of hosts had left us a seed,
We had been like Sodom, and had resembled Gomorrah.

It will be seen that I have here placed in immediate juxta-position with ver. 6–13 ver. 27–29. I have done so because they evidently relate to the same subject, while the intervening verses relate to one wholly different, and are apparently interjected after the manner of an introverted parallelism.

The apostle's answer to the objection which he is handling is, in substance, that the case is not as it appears. That it is not a case in which "the promise of God" had wholly failed, is obvious from the fact that *some* Jews did believe the Gospel ; while it is capable of proof that the word of God did otherwise take its full and intended effect. The

manner in which the apostle proceeds to prove this is two-fold; he first adduces a general principle, and then some specific illustrations of it.

The general principle which the apostle adduces is expressed in the following terms (ver. 6): "for they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel." The meaning of this is, that the name Israel is used in two senses, a carnal and a spiritual one; and that in this respect it corresponds with the promise, which also has a carnal and a spiritual meaning. The carnal and the spiritual Israel are not commensurate; the carnal Israel comprehending the whole nation, the spiritual Israel comprising only such part of them as God had in gracious sovereignty chosen to this privilege. Now to the spiritual Israel only was the promise in its spiritual sense made, and if to them (the believing Israelites) it was fulfilled, the word of God had taken full effect.

After laying down this general principle, the apostle adduces from Jewish history several examples, showing that it was characteristic of God to deal with his people in a way of sovereignty and discrimination.

1. A distinction was made among the immediate descendants of Abraham, the inheritance being bestowed not on all equally, but on one exclusively. Ishmael and the sons of Keturah were the seed of Abraham, but the favoured child was Isaac, and Canaan was exclusively his. Hence it is evident, says the apostle, that in that case the natural children were not the children intended by God, or that carnal descendants were not, as such, entitled even to carnal blessings. Those counted for the seed were the children of promise, as Isaac was to Sarah, and the fruit of a divine power. This is an important distinction: ver. 7–9.

2. The second case adduced for illustration is that of Jacob and Esau. These were both descendants of Abraham by Isaac, the favoured seed, yet only one of these possessed the inheritance. In this the birthright was taken from the elder and given to the younger son; and the announcement of this intention was made before the children were born (ver. 10–12), so absolute was the sovereignty displayed.

3. A third exercise of sovereignty appears in the subsequent treatment of the two nations: "As it is written, I have preferred Jacob, and rejected Esau" (ver. 13). These words are cited from Mal. i. 3, and much difficulty has been

found in the interpretation of them, from the phrase in our English version "I have hated Esau." That the word "hate" may be understood of a love comparatively less is evident from our Lord's use of it in Luke xiv. 26—"If a man hate not his father and his mother," &c.; and this suggestion affords a good meaning. The most satisfactory interpretation, however, is supplied by the context, which clearly refers to the comparatively early desolation of Idumea, while Judæa was long afterwards a country.

4. A fourth instance of divine sovereignty is elicited from the language of Isaiah (chap. x. 22), where he speaks of the Ephraimites and their deliverance from the Assyrian yoke; in which, however, he intimates, "a remnant only" would be preserved. The apostle's quotation does not correspond exactly with either the Hebrew or the Septuagint, but it gives the sense: ver. 27, 28.

5. A fifth exercise of divine sovereignty is indicated by another quotation from Isaiah (chap. i. 9), where, describing the lamentable state of the kingdom of Judah under Ahaz, he says that it nearly resembled the utter desolation of Sodom and Gomorrah: ver. 29.

The apostle's argument as sustained by these illustrations is, that God often dealt with the carnal Israel in a way of sovereignty; and that, consequently, it was not surprising he should distribute spiritual gifts in a similar manner. This assumes, of course, the fundamental identity of the kingdoms of providence and grace, and the prevalence of the same principles in both.

God's exercise of Sovereignty not inequitable: chap. ix. 14–26.

The apostle's direct statement of the discriminating method in which God had conferred favours on the descendants of Abraham now suggests an objection, which arrests for a time the progress of his argument (ver. 14). "Do we say, then, that therein God is unrighteous?" Is not this inequality of treatment inequitable? Ought not all to be treated alike?

To this the apostle replies strongly in the negative. He vindicates for God the claim of sovereignty, however, not by argument, but by adducing the direct assertion of this claim by God himself. And of this he cites two examples:—

IX. 14. Do we then say that God is unrighteous in dealing thus?
By no means.
15. For to Moses he saith—
I will show mercy where I will show mercy.
And I will compassionate those whom I will compassionate.
16. In this respect, therefore, it is not of him that willeth or of him that striveth,
But of God who is pleased to show mercy.
17. The Scripture saith also concerning Pharaoh,—
For this very purpose I have raised thee up,
That I might show my power towards thee,
And that my glory might be proclaimed in all the earth.
18. Thus, not only whom he will he treateth kindly,
But whom he will he treateth severely.

The first of these examples is drawn from God's declaration to Moses on a very memorable occasion, see Exodus xxxiii. 19. Here, it is to be remarked, the declaration is restricted to the showing of mercy, the reiteration giving force to it. And from this declaration an inference is drawn—"So then, it is not of him that willeth," &c., ver. 16. Perhaps this is an allusion to Jacob and Esau; or more probably it is a proverbial statement of a general truth, that divine benefits are conferred, not according to man's desert or endeavours, but to God's pleasure.

The apostle further advances in his argument by adducing an example in which there was more than the conferring of benefits, even the infliction of calamity also. This is the very striking case of Pharaoh, ver. 17. The point of this example is, that the signal calamities which befel the Egyptian monarch were not inflicted, (as might be supposed,) either because he was remarkably wicked, or as the punishment of his wickedness, although he undoubtedly deserved all he suffered; but because God was pleased to take an occasion of displaying his own power and glory. There were other men as wicked, probably more so, yet they were not visited; perhaps they were pardoned, and Pharaoh might have been so too if God had pleased: but on him God was pleased to inflict calamity, because he had an object to answer by that display of his power. Therefore God, who knew his pride and obstinacy, raised him to the throne of Egypt at that particular crisis.

From this example the apostle draws another general conclusion in the following terms:—

IX. 18. Thus, not only whom he will he treateth kindly,
But whom he will he treateth severely.

Our English version reads "whom he will he hardeneth." To the interpretation of this phrase considerable difficulty attaches. Because God is said in the Old Testament to have "hardened Pharaoh's heart," it is taken for granted by many that it is the hardening of the heart that is here spoken of; and thus, a question is raised, undoubtedly of extreme difficulty. Whatever may be the amount of this difficulty, however, or whatever may be its solution, we have nothing to do with it here; since the apostle, when speaking of Pharaoh makes no reference to the hardening *of his heart;* and, when speaking generally, he says nothing about hardening *the heart* of any one, but only of hardening *them.* A critical remark will here open our way. No doubt the verb σκληρύνω primarily means *to render hard;* but it seems also to have a secondary meaning, namely, *to treat hardly.* It is thus used of the ostrich, in Job. xxxix. 16. I give the passage from Good's translation:—

14. Behold, she committeth her eggs to the earth,
And letteth them grow warm upon the sand;
15. And is heedless that the foot may crush them,
Or the beast of the field trample upon them.
16. *Hard-used* are her young ones as though not belonging to her.

In the Septuagint the phrase is ἀπέσκλερύνε τὰ τέκνα ἑαυτῆς. To the choice of the secondary meaning the exigency of the passage under consideration constrains us, since the subject treated of is not the influencing of character, but the modification of treatment. In this sense only, indeed, does it form an intelligible meaning.

In so far as this express claim of sovereignty by God himself is adapted to answer the question, "Is not God unrighteous?" its force must lie in the assumption that, since God is essentially and infinitely righteous, everything that he does or claims to do must also be righteous.

The apostle now supposes another objector to rise up, and he gives the objection and his answer in the following verses:—

IX. 19. Thou wilt say, then, to me,
Why doth he still lay blame?
For who hath frustrated his purpose?

IX. 20. Nay, O man: who art thou that thou shouldest dispute with God?
The moulded vessel doth not say to the moulder Why hast thou made me thus?
21. Or hath not the potter power over the clay,
Of the same mass to make one vessel for a use more honourable, and one for a use less honourable?
22. And what if God—
Having determined to show his wrath,
And to display his power,
Endured with much long-suffering vessels of wrath fitted to destruction,
[And ultimately visited them with signal judgment:
Is this to be complained of?]
And [what if God—
23. Having determined] to display his richest grace on vessels of mercy whom he had appointed to glory,
24. Even on us whom he hath called, not Jews only but Gentiles;
[Bestowed on them all spiritual blessings through Christ Jesus:
Is this to be complained of?]
25. As he saith by Hosea—
I will call them my people who were not my people,
And her beloved who was not beloved:
26. And it shall be in the place where it was said unto them Ye are not my people,
There they shall be called the sons of the living God.

It is of great importance to the right understanding of the passage thus introduced that the precise point of this objection should be kept in view.

By some it has been supposed to relate to the clause immediately preceding—"whom he will he hardeneth," taking this phrase in the sense of hardening the heart. The question raised would be—"Why does God yet find fault with wicked actions, since he has irresistibly made a wicked heart?" Of course, after adopting a different meaning of the word *harden*, I can have nothing to do with this question; to which, however, it may be observed, the apostle's subsequent argument furnishes no answer.

Rather, the general sentiment of the preceding passage, that God determines the condition of men, whether of mercy or of judgment, according to his pleasure, is here referred to; and in view of it the objector asks, "Why doth he then find fault"—that is, with any one? Why does he reprove sin, or inflict judgment? Why does he not, since he can, have mercy upon all?

To the objection thus understood the apostle gives a most appropriate and elaborate answer.

In the first place he intimates that the objection is an unwarrantable interference with the administration of God: ver. 20. "Nay, O man, who art thou that thou shouldest dispute with God?" shouldest challenge, or call into question, his proceedings? The glorious excellence of God's character, and man's infinite inferiority of nature and position, alike forbid such a freedom.

In the next place an element of sovereignty is indicated by the apostle as arising out of the fact of creation, and as involved in the relation of the Creator to the creature. Man may not dispute with God, because he is the creature and God is the creator. The apostle illustrates this point by a comparison drawn from "the potter's house," ver. 20, 21.

IX. 21. Hath not the potter power over the clay,
Of the same mass to make one vessel for a use more honourable, and one for a use less honourable?

The illustration here employed is simple, but its application requires to be carried out with some care. On the one hand, it is not to be referred to God's decrees, but to his actual proceedings towards men; and on the other hand, it is not to be referred to his original formation of mankind, whether physical or moral, but to his subsequent administration towards them. The idea, then, is this: As the potter has a mass of clay before him to mould into vessels, and is under no obligation to make all vessels after the same model, but is quite at liberty to make one for a nobler and one for an humbler use; so God, having in his hands the race of man to administer their lot in holy wisdom, is not bound to make the condition of all the same, but is at liberty to allot to them different experiences according to his pleasure.

The following passage from the prophet Jeremiah was doubtless in the apostle's mind, and will fully illustrate his meaning.

Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. So I went down to the potter's house, and behold he was at work upon the stones. And the vessel which he was making of clay was marred by the hand of the potter; and he began anew, and made it another vessel, as it seemed meet to the potter to make. Then came the word of JEHOVAH unto me, saying:

Cannot I do after the manner of this potter,
With respect to you, O house of Israel? saith JEHOVAH.
Behold, as the clay is at the disposal of the potter,
So are ye at my disposal, O house of Israel.
Jeremiah xviii. 2–6. (Blayney.)

In the last place, the apostle proceeds in his argument by a forcible appeal in the interrogative form. He frames this appeal in two sentences, both of which are evidently incomplete, and require some words to be added in order to make out the sense; ver. 22–24. Any person who will read ver. 22–24 in the authorized version will be conscious that something is wanting, and that in the structure of the sentence there is extreme condensation. There are, in fact, two sentences artificially wrought into one; and when these are separated it is found that neither of them is complete. The phrase at the commencement—"What if"—evidently requires a corresponding phrase at the conclusion; and the expression of the thought in which the force of the appeals lies requires in both to be perfected. I venture to place these sentences again before the eye of the reader; the brackets [ ] will distinctly mark the portions which I have added.

IX. 22. And what if God—
Having determined to show his wrath,
And to display his power,
Endured with much long-suffering vessels of wrath fitted to destruction,
[And ultimately visited them with signal judgment:
Is this to be complained of?]
And [what if God—
23. Having determined] to display his richest grace on vessels of mercy whom he had appointed unto glory,
24. Even on us whom he hath called, not Jews only but Gentiles,
[Bestowed on them all spiritual blessings through Christ Jesus:
Is this to be complained of?]

The verses are now not only intelligible, but plain; and the reader will see that, while I have added nothing unnecessary, everything that I have added is naturally, and even obviously, suggested by the context.

There should be observed in the phraseology of these two passages, in every point but one so exactly parallel, one difference both significant and important. In the former,

speaking of the "vessels of wrath," the apostle says simply that they were "*fitted* to destruction;" in the latter, speaking of the vessels of mercy, he says that *God* "had appointed them unto glory." Here is evidently a distinction carefully made; and the idea is that, whereas Christians are made such by the grace of God, man's wickedness comes out of his own heart.

It should be observed also that, in the phrase in the English version "*before* prepared unto glory," the word "*before*" should not be introduced.

What, now, is the force of this appeal—Is there anything to complain of in these dispensations? If there be any cause of complaint, it can relate only to God's infliction of judgment; and here it can be found only in this, that judgment is inflicted either without desert, or beyond desert. This, however, is never the fact. That it was not so in the case of Pharaoh is evident. And that it is not so in the other cases to which the apostle refers is equally clear from the language he employs; the vessels of wrath are "fitted to (deserving of) destruction;" and God has "endured them with much long-suffering." The only common sense answer that can be given to the question, Is there anything to complain of? is, Assuredly not.

And the question, Why does not God show mercy to all? is thus answered. Since God gives no man anything to complain of, it is not too much for all men to allow him to choose such occasions and methods as to him may seem wisest and best for the manifestation of his character, whether in mercy or in judgment. Lying at the bottom of this is the following sentiment. The reason why God does not show mercy to all is that he has in view a higher object than the well-being of mankind, namely, the manifestation of his own character; and, in the guilty state of the race, he prefers, as he is entitled and bound to prefer, the manifestation of his various attributes to the making of all men happy.

In the 25th and 26th verses is a quotation from the prophecy of Hosea (chap. i. 10, and ii. 23), suggested, I conceive, by the apostle's reference to the Gentiles in ver. 24.

The reader will, of course, observe the perfect unity of the passage under consideration; the two objections to the removal of which it is devoted both arising out of the exercise of divine sovereignty which the apostle has been vindicating.

The Instrumental Cause of the Reception of the Gospel in the World: chap. ix. ver. 30–33.

The apostle having traced the position of Christianity in the world primarily to the sovereignty of God, and having vindicated at much length the exercise of sovereignty herein manifest, now turns to the secondary or instrumental cause of it, to be found in the conduct of the Jews and Gentiles respectively.

The passage, though short, is constructed with much art and intricacy, and it will scarcely be understood unless the arrangement of its parts is clearly perceived. The apostle begins by the following phrase—"What shall we say, then?" What, then, is the case before us? What are the facts? They are two: on the one hand, the Gentiles had attained justification, and, on the other, the Jews had not attained it.

In stating the fact respecting the Jews, the apostle twice uses the phrase *νόμον δικαιοσύνης*—literally, "a law of righteousness;" or, as I understand it, a method of justification: a phrase more applicable perhaps to the Jews than the Gentiles, because a method of justification was set before them, while the Gentiles were left in darkness.

To return to the facts, however. The Gentiles had attained justification, the Jews had not attained it. The facts were certainly remarkable; inasmuch as the Gentiles, abandoned to utter ignorance and corruption, had not sought after justification; while the Jews, amidst their divinely significant ritual, had sought it.

When the apostle asks, "Wherefore?" the question must, of course, be taken as applying to both Jew and Gentile; and the answer, so far as it relates to the Gentiles, must be taken from the close of ver. 30, where it seems to be inserted by anticipation—"justification by faith:" that is to say, the Gentiles, who had in their previous life not sought justification, had now found it, because they accepted it as in the Gospel preached to them, by faith. The Jews, on the contrary, who had previously been seeking a way of justification, had not found it, because they, rejecting the Gospel, did not seek it by faith, but by works. The passage may be arranged as follows:—

IX. 30. What, then, are the facts?
The Gentiles, who did not seek after justification, have attained it;
31. While the Jews, who did seek after justification, have not attained it.
32. And what is the reason?
[On the one hand, the Gentiles accepted] justification by faith;
[On the other, Israel] sought it not by faith, but by works.

In the actual position of Christianity in the world, there was concerned, not only God's sovereignty, but man's instrumentality; and, from the course respectively pursued towards the Gospel by Jew and Gentile, the result naturally followed. Herein, indeed, the apostle goes on to remark, the Jews had only exhibited a culpable obstinacy, which had been both foreseen by God and foretold in their own Scriptures. The passages here quoted (but without exactness) are Isaiah xxviii. 16 and viii. 14, both of them direct predictions of the Messiah; and, according to these predictions, the Jews had now stumbled at that stumbling-block—either the Messiah himself as he had been manifested, or at the doctrine of justification by his blood—while men of every other nation, believing, were saved.

IX. 32. Thus they stumbled at that stumbling-block,
33. As it is written:
Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling-block and rock of offence,
But whosoever trusteth in him shall not be confounded.

The great Stumbling-block: chap. x. 1–18.

On looking at this portion, which contains almost the whole of the tenth chapter, it is by no means easy in the first instance to determine what is the subject of it. That part of it which is most distinctly suggestive is contained in ver. 12–15. Here is evidently a vindication of the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, and with some vehemence of tone. It is plain, says the apostle, that the Gentiles are to be saved; but *how can* they be saved if the Gospel is not preached to them? The most natural supposition, then, is that, as the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles was the great scandal which rendered Christianity offensive to the Jews, so the apostle here takes up this aspect of it for explanation and vindication. We may be happy enough, perhaps, to find the passage tractable on this suppo-

sition. I think, then, that in the whole of the passage now before us the apostle is dealing with this subject, and that he treats it under two heads: on the one hand, he admits and shows that the Jews might be saved by their own Scriptures, ver. 1–10; and on the other hand, he maintains the necessity of the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles in order to their salvation, ver. 11–18.

Jews may be Saved by their own Scriptures: chap. x. ver. 1–10.

X. 1. Brethren, my heartfelt desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.
2. For I acknowledge that they are zealously devout,
Although they are not guided by correct knowledge.
3. For, being unacquainted with God's method of justification,
And being bent on making good their own method of justification,
To God's method of justification they have not submitted themselves.
4. Now Christ is the scope of the [ritual] law in relation to justification.
[And he is so for the justification] of every one who trusteth in him.
5. For Moses describeth the method of justification by the [ritual] law thus—
The man that doeth these things shall live by them.
6. But he elsewhere describeth a method of justification which is by faith, thus—
Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven?
That is, to bring Christ down from above:
7. Or, Who shall descend into the abyss?
That is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.
8. But how does he proceed?
He saith—
The thing required is near thee,
In thy mouth and in thy mind.
Now this describeth the method of justification by faith,
Which we publish:
9. That, if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus,
And shalt believe with thy mind that God hath raised him from the dead,
Thou shalt be saved:
10. For with the mind man believeth to justification,
And with the mouth he maketh confession to salvation.

The apostle begins this section by an expression of his "heartfelt desire and prayer to God" that Israel "might be saved." This might seem to be a repetition in less forcible

terms of the solemn asseveration with which he had commenced the ninth chapter, but its connexion with what follows gives it a different character. He assigns two reasons for his prayer. The first is in ver. 2, namely, that he had observed in some, perhaps in many of them, a fervent devoutness from which the best results might be hoped for; the second appears in ver. 4 *seq.*, in the fact that the institutions and writings of Moses contained substantially the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ. It is clear, therefore, that with the apostle's "desire and prayer" there was associated a feeling of hope, since it was at once possible that Jews might be saved by their own Scriptures apart from the new and offensive publication of the Gospel, and probable that Jews devoutly-minded would be so, as, indeed, many in former ages must have been.

In respect of the former ground of hope, the fervent devoutness in the observance of the ritual law which he had observed in many of the Jews, while he does them no more than justice in acknowledging it as a fact, the apostle combines with this acknowledgment the statement that their zeal was not guided by a correct understanding of the ritual law itself; since they were evidently ignorant of God's method of justification, and were consequently bent on making good a method of justification erroneously conceived by themselves—a sadly fruitless, and even mischievous expenditure of all their labour.

In proceeding (ver. 4) to show to what extent the substance of Christianity was to be found in the Jewish ritual and Scriptures, the apostle has two points to keep in view. The first is that justification is *by Christ*, the second is that justification is *by faith*.

In order to show that, according to the Jewish ritual, justification is *by Christ*, the apostle confines himself to the direct assertion that "Christ is the scope of the law for justification" (ver. 4). "The law" here spoken of is, no doubt, the ritual law; and Christ is said to be "the scope" of it, inasmuch as it was a body of types fulfilled in him as the antitype. Now it might well be supposed to be known to an instructed and thoughtful Jew that the ritual law *was* a body of types; that as such it must have an antitype; and that by the antitype alone could the spiritual blessings which it shadowed forth be secured. To a *devout* Jew it might

well be manifest also that the antitype of the typical system was Christ, concerning whom David and the prophets had borne ample testimony, and who had recently been set forth as such with many convincing proofs.

In the next place the apostle has to show that it was taught in the Old Testament that justification was *by faith* —"Christ is the scope of the law for justification to every one who trusteth in him." In order to effect this he cites passages from the ancient Scriptures from which, according to him, the divine method of justification by faith might be learned. Thus Moses describes the method of justification by the law by saying, "the man that *doeth* these things shall live by them" (Levit. xviii. 5); it is a method of justification by works: while elsewhere he represents a method of justification by faith in the following terms: "Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend to heaven? Or, Who shall descend into the deep? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy mind." In Deut. xxx. 12–14, we find the passage which the apostle here, with some freedom, quotes; but, if there be some freedom in the manner of his quotation, one cannot but feel that there is much more in the application which he makes of it.

On looking at the connexion, it is obvious that Moses is speaking of his own law, as appears from the expression "This commandment which I command thee this day;" and in all fairness a meaning must be attached to the passage (and held to be the primary meaning of it) which shall be pertinent to that law. In substance Moses tells the Israelites that the law he had given them was not hard to be either acquired or understood. Neither the distant sea, nor the more distant heaven, needed to be explored for it, for it was, as given through him (although God's law), "very nigh" to them. It might seem, however, that so elaborate a law of ceremonies could not without difficulty be known to the Israelites at large, and through successive generations; but even this was provided for. On the one hand, it was the function of the tribe of Levi, a tribe scattered throughout the whole land, to teach Israel "all the statutes" which had been enjoined on them (Levit. x. 11); and on the other hand, directions were given for domestic instruction, as in Deut. vi. 5–9: "And these words which I command thee shall be in thine heart (or mind), and thou shalt teach them diligently,"

&c. Thus the law of Moses was "in their mouth and in their mind." It was more than a written law; it was a living law. The word *heart* was currently used by the ancients to denote the mind with all its faculties; and thence, as occasion required and the connexion indicated, the separate powers of the mind—as here, perhaps, the memory.

We must now ask the most important question respecting this passage; namely—On what authority does the apostle quote it as illustrating his doctrine of justification? It may be observed that some commentators regard the 29th and 30th chapters of Deuteronomy as looking forward to the times of the Messiah: a view from which I altogether dissent. In my judgment there are only two ways in which the question can be answered. Either, on the one hand, the apostle uses the words of Moses in a way of accommodation; or, on the other hand, he regards them as having a double sense, and as properly applicable to his subject. Divided as, of course, opinions are upon this point, I confess my adhesion to the latter of them. I think that in any other view the citation could not at all answer the apostle's purpose, which is to adduce something from the ancient Scriptures which a devout Jew might have understood—and this cannot be said of a mere accommodation.

Here, then, is the *Gospel by Moses*, or his veiled and enigmatical description of "the method of justification by faith."

X. 6. Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven?
7. Or, Who shall descend into the abyss?
8. For the word is nigh thee,
Even in thy mouth and in thy mind.

Or with the apostle's interpretation, thus:—

X. 6. Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven?
That is, to bring Christ down from above:
7. Or, Who shall descend into the abyss?
That is, to bring up Christ from the dead.
8. For the word is nigh thee,
Even in thy mouth and in thy mind.

This describeth the method of justification by faith
Which we publish:

9. That, if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus,
And shalt believe with thy mind that God hath raised him from the dead,
Thou shalt be saved.
10. For with the mind man believeth unto justification,
And with the mouth he maketh confession unto salvation.

It is plain that the apostle regarded the great facts of the Gospel—the incarnation, the death, and the resurrection of Christ—as indicated in this passage. His proof that the phrase "in thy mouth and in thy mind" describes the doctrine of justification by faith is given in ver. 10, and is simply this: that under the Christian dispensation both "the mind" and "the mouth" have to do with salvation—"the mind" in believing and "the mouth" in confessing, as opened in ver. 9.

Here it must be observed that the apostle introduces an entirely new idea respecting the conditions of salvation under the Christian dispensation. Of faith we have heard before, and heard much; but of confession nothing until now. What does the apostle mean by this term? In what respect is the confession of Christ connected with salvation? Is there instituted by the divine Author of Christianity an act of confession? There is; and it is to be found in the ordinance of baptism. This passage may be illustrated by Mark xvi. 16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

And if the apostle here refers to baptism, his language supplies an argument respecting the nature of baptism which ought not to be overlooked. If baptism be an act of confession, and of confession made by the mouth, these are assuredly conditions which infant-baptism cannot fulfil.

Moreover, the moral position in which baptism is here placed is striking and solemn.

X. 9. If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus—
Thou shalt be saved.

Not, indeed, by confession without faith; but neither by faith without confession—the natural and direct fruit of faith, unless its growth be blasted by ignorance or mistake. Otherwise confession is faith's necessary evidence, and the Christian's inevitable test.

Notice should be taken also of the prominence given by the apostle to the resurrection of Christ in ver. 9.

X. 9. If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus,
And shalt believe with thy mind that God hath raised him from the dead,
Thou shalt be saved.

This idea is evidently brought forward from ver. 7. And it is sufficient for his purpose in this place, because the fact

of Christ's resurrection, not apart and by itself, but in connexion with, and presupposing, his incarnation and his death, contains by implication the whole Gospel. More especially was the thorough belief of it important at the time when the apostle wrote.

Such, then, is the apostle's view of the Mosaic Gospel, or the doctrine of justification by faith, and the duty of a public profession of faith, as enigmatically taught by the Israelitish lawgiver. The foundation on which the apostle's interpretation of Old Testament language rests seems to be, that a double meaning—a carnal and spiritual meaning—ran completely through the ancient Scriptures, and was by the Jews fully recognized and understood. What a book the Pentateuch must have been *to them!* Wisdom now, alas! lost; but lost only as one sun eclipses ten thousand stars. The New Testament is much more to us.

It is in this manner that the apostle works out his conclusion that the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ might be learned from Moses; and so that Jews might be saved by their own Scriptures, apart from the new preaching of the Gospel.

The preaching of the Gospel necessary for the Gentiles:
chap. x. ver. 11–18.

The design of the apostle in this section is to vindicate the universal preaching of the Gospel, to which the Jews so strongly objected, by showing its relation to the interest which the Gentiles had in salvation itself. He begins this topic by a strong assertion of this fact.

X. 11. Now the Scripture saith,
Whosoever believeth on him shall not be confounded.
12. There is, therefore, no difference between the Jew and the Gentile,
For the same Lord over all is merciful to all who confess him:
[Again it saith—]
13. Whosoever shall confess the name of the Lord shall be saved.

The declaration in ver. 11 is taken from Isaiah xxviii. 16, and is here repeated from chap. ix. 33; that in ver. 13 is cited from Joel ii. 32, and is cited also in Acts ii. 21. The phrase "shall call on the name of the Lord" I have here changed into "shall confess the name of the Lord;" the verb

ἐπικαλέσηται being in the middle voice, and the literal rendering, therefore, being "Whosoever shall call himself by the name of the Lord"—an idea more briefly conveyed by the term "confess." It may be observed that in ver. 11 the apostle speaks of *believing* in Christ, in ver. 13 of *confessing* him; referring, probably, to the distinction recently made in ver. 10, 11.

This point being established, the apostle proceeds to argue:—

X. 14. How, then, shall they confess him in whom they have not believed?
And how shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard?
And how shall they hear unless one publish the glad tidings?
And how shall any publish it unless they be sent?

All these interrogations concentrate their force on one conclusion, namely, that since salvation is for the Gentiles the Gospel *must* be preached to them. This conclusion the apostle immediately proceeds to confirm by a quotation foretelling the fact.

X. 15. As it is written—
How beautiful are the feet of them who publish good news of peace,
Who bring glad tidings of good things!

This citation is from Isaiah lii. 7; and the passage has a primary reference to the return from Babylon.

The verse which stands in immediate connexion with this is not the 16th, but the 17th:—

X. 17. So, then, faith presupposeth hearing the glad tidings,
And hearing the glad tidings is by the appointment of God.

This forms an apposite conclusion of his argument in defence of the universal preaching of the Gospel, which was at once necessary in itself and divinely-instituted. It is remarkable that the apostle proves the latter point, not by referring to Christ's commission, but by a quotation from the prophets. He was arguing *with Jews.*

The alteration in the order of the verses which I have here made—placing ver. 17 before ver. 16—exhibits another example of the practice which we have already frequently met with, of linking two parts of a subject together.

Before concluding this subject the apostle anticipates an objection; as if some one said, or might say, "But, though

you preach the Gospel to all, all do not believe it." To which the apostle answers, "I admit this; but, first, this was foreseen, and foretold; and, secondly, this does not alter the fact. Although not all the nations have *believed* the Gospel, all have *heard* it, which is the thing to be vindicated."

X. 16. Not all [the Gentiles], however, have obeyed the glad tidings.
[I admit this:]
For [to them may be applied what] Isaiah saith—
Lord, Who hath believed our report?
18. But I reply—
Have they not all heard it?
Yes, verily; for [to this may be applied the language—]
Their sound went out into all the earth,
And their words unto the end of the world.

Here again the apostle cites from the Old Testament two passages, the applicability of which does not at the first moment appear. The first of these is from Isaiah liii. 1, where the prophet is obviously speaking prospectively of the unbelief of the Jews, not of that of the Gentiles. I suppose that this is an accommodation. The second is from Psalm xix. 4; which directly relates to the silent eloquence of the sun and the stars, a thing far removed from the preaching of the Gospel. The suggestion which pleases me best in this case is that the apostle uses the passage as a metaphor; referring to the actual rapidity with which the Gospel had been diffused through the whole of the Roman—the then known—world, he *compares* it to the revolution of the starry heavens. The idea is precisely given by Dr. Watts in his version of Psalm xix.

Sun, moon, and stars, convey thy praise
Round the whole earth, and never stand;
So, when thy truth began its race,
It touched and glanced on every land.

We may now observe that the passage as a whole has an entire unity.

X. 11. Now the Scripture saith—
Whosoever believeth on him shall not be put to shame.
12. There is, therefore, no difference between the Jew and the Gentile,
For the same Lord over all is merciful to all who confess him.
[Again it saith—]
13. Whosoever shall confess the name of the Lord shall be saved.

X. 14. But how shall they confess him on whom they have not believed?
And how shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard?
And how shall they hear unless one publish the glad tidings?
15. And how shall any publish it unless they be sent?

As it is written—
How beautiful are the feet of them who publish good news of peace,
Who bring glad tidings of good things!

17. So, then, faith presupposes hearing the glad tidings,
And hearing the glad tidings is by the appointment of God.

16. Not all [the Gentiles], however, have obeyed the glad tidings.
[I admit this:]
For [to them may be applied what] Isaiah saith—
Lord, Who hath believed our report?
18. But I reply—
Have they not all heard it?
Yes, verily; for [to this may be applied the language—]
Their sound went out into all the earth,
And their words unto the end of the world.

The Facts in their Scriptural aspect: chap. x. 19 to chap. xi. *fin.*

Having treated the two great obstacles in his way—the first the obnoxious exercise of the divine sovereignty, and the second the equally obnoxious preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles—the apostle proceeds in conclusion to open the scriptural aspects of the case.

The Facts were foreseen and foretold: chap. x. 19–21.

He begins by adducing proofs that the facts were both foreseen and foretold.

X. 19. I now ask,
Did not Israel always know that things would be thus?
First Moses saith—
I will excite you to emulation by those who are not my people,
And by an idolatrous nation will I provoke you.
20. But Isaiah groweth bolder, and saith—
I have been found by those who did not seek me,
I have manifested myself to those who did not inquire after me.
21. While concerning Israel he saith—
The whole day I have stretched out my hands
To a people disobedient and refractory.

The force of the question with which this passage opens is this: has it not been, in all periods of Jewish history, a thing declared and notorious that thus it would be? In order to answer this question the apostle adduces two striking quotations from the Old Testament. The first is from that remarkable piece of anticipated Jewish history, Deut. xxxii. (ver. 21); and the second is from Isaiah, chap. lxv. 1, 2; both of them quite to the point. And the necessary inference is that the facts as thus foretold ought not, on their occurrence, to have created any surprise.

A remnant of Israel is saved: chap. xi. 1–6.

XI. 1. I ask, then,
Hath God cast away his [whole] people?
By no means.
For I myself am an Israelite,
Of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.
2. God hath not cast away his chosen people.
Do you not recollect what the Scripture containeth concerning Elijah,
How he pleadeth with God respecting Israel, saying:
3. Lord, they have killed thy prophets,
And overthrown thine altars;
And I alone am left,
And they seek my life?
4. But what did the Divine Oracle reply to him?
I have reserved to myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.
5. So at the present time there is a remnant according to God's gracious choice.
6. Now, if the inheritance of spiritual blessings be by grace, then it is not by works,
Otherwise grace is no more grace:
But, if it is by works, then it is not by grace,
Otherwise works are no more works.

The question with which the apostle begins this section seems to arise out of the apparently universal tenor of the passages he had just quoted, "Hath God cast away his whole people?" Are *all* the Jews lost? To this he replies by a strong negation, which he sustains, first, by a specific example, and secondly, by a general principle. The specific example is derived from his personal experience—"For I also am an Israelite," ver. 1. The general principle is thus expressed—"God hath not cast away his chosen people."

The meaning of this is that God had from the beginning determined to whom the spiritual blessings should belong, and that he had effectually secured them to these, none of the chosen being cast away (ver. 2).

He then brings forward an illustration from the history of Elijah, 1 Kings xix. 14–18. As in this case there were more true worshippers of God than were supposed, so now there were more Jewish believers in Christ than were supposed—"a remnant according to God's gracious choice."

Ver. 6, which is very singularly introduced here, must, I suppose, be taken to indicate a momentary diversion of the apostle's mind from the direct course of his argument, by a sudden return of his thoughts to the question of justification by works. He had just before been showing that justification could not be by works because it was by faith, chap. x. 3 *seq.*; and now he throws in a collateral argument which comes in his way to the same effect. Election to justification is of grace, consequently justification itself must be so; and therefore it cannot be of works—otherwise the nature of things is variable, and words are deceptive. The two methods are essentially different, and cannot be blended.

The general result stated: chap. xi. 7–9.

XI. 7. What, then, is the fact?
Not all Israel have obtained the justification sought for;
But the chosen people have obtained it,
And the rest have been blinded—
8. According as it is written—
God hath given them the spirit of slumber,
Eyes not adapted to see,
And ears not fitted to hear.
Until this day.
9. David also saith,
Let their table be made a snare and a trap,
And a stumbling-block and a recompense to them;
Let their eyes be darkened that they may not see,
And bow down their back alway.

In this passage the apostle, in brief and explicit terms, states the general result of God's dispensation towards Israel, ver. 7. In ver. 8 and 9 he makes two citations from the Old Testament in support of his last assertion. Ver. 8 consists of portions of, or allusions to, several passages of Scripture—Isa. xxix. 10; vi. 9, 10; Deut. xxix. 4; and it seems in-

tended, not so much as a quotation in proof, as a collateral description in scriptural language.

The quotation in the 9th and 10th verses is from Psalm lxix. 22—one of the Messianic psalms; and it seems to be quoted for the sake of the phrase in ver. 10—"Let their eyes be darkened that they may not see."

A difficulty, no doubt, attaches to these passages, in so far as the blindness of unbelieving Jews is (apparently) ascribed to divine action—"*God hath given them* the spirit of slumber," see Deut. xxix. 4; Matt. xiii. 14. We know that such language cannot be taken strictly; since, if it were so, it would lead to a total denial of human responsibility and guilt. Since man's spiritual blindness and obduracy are culpable, and therefore voluntary, they can be said to be from God only in the sense that he has withheld the gracious influence which in other instances he has exerted. It is another phase of the case treated at large in the 9th chapter.

The whole Nation will be ultimately saved: chap. xi. 11–27.

XI. 11. I now ask,
Have Israel so stumbled that they will fall?
By no means.
On the other hand, by occasion of their stumbling salvation is published to the Gentiles,
So that this may excite them to emulation.
12. And if their adversity thus promote the happiness of the world,
[How much more would their prosperity?]
And if their impoverishment increase the wealth of the world,
How much more would their abundance?
13. Now I speak thus to you Gentiles, both because I am the apostle of the Gentiles,
I claim the right of my office,
14. And in order that I may provoke my kinsmen to emulation,
And may save some of them.
15. And if their rejection lead to the conversion of the world,
What would their restoration be but a resurrection of the dead?
16. Now, if the corn of the firstfruit be holy, so is the dough;
And if the root be holy, so are the branches.
17. And if some of the branches have been broken off,
And thou, a wild olive, hast been grafted in among them,
And with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree,

XI. 18. Glory not over the [broken] branches.
Or, if thou glory, [remember thy position]:
Not thou bearest the root, but the root thee.
19. Thou wilt say, then,
The branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.
20. [True]: but because of unbelief they were broken off,
And thou holdest thy privilege by faith.
Be not, therefore, elated,
But be careful:
21. For, since God spared not the natural branches,
Take heed lest he also spare not thee.
22. Recognize herein both the kindness and the severity of God:
Towards those who have stumbled severity,
But towards thee the kindness of God;
If thou continue [by faith] in the privilege conferred,
Otherwise thou also will be cut off.
23. And they also, if they abide not in unbelief, shall be grafted in again:
For God is able to graft them in again.
24. For, if thou wert cut out of the naturally wild olive tree,
And wert grafted contrary to nature into the good olive tree,
How much more easily shall the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?
25. For I would not, brethren, that ye should be uninformed of this mystery,
Lest ye should have a high conceit of yourselves,
That temporary blindness hath occurred to Israel,
Until the fulness of the Gentiles is come in,
26. And then all Israel shall be saved.
As it is written,
There shall come out of Zion a deliverer,
And he shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob;
27. For this is my covenant with them
When I shall take away their sins.

The apostle having asserted (chap. ix. 32) that Israel as a nation had "stumbled at that stumbling-block," now proceeds to qualify that assertion by an important addition. He begins by raising the question—"Has the nation of Israel so fatally stumbled that they must utterly fall?" And to this question he answers by his usual strong negative, "By no means." He does not at the moment, however, give the question any further direct answer, but seems to hold the subject in suspense, while he goes through an extended series of considerations adapted to correct the spirit of censoriousness and pride in which the Gentile converts might, under the circumstances, but too naturally regard the rejected Jews. The reply is fully given in ver. 25, 26.

XI. 11. I now ask, Have Israel so stumbled that they will fall?
By no means.
25. For I would not, brethren, that ye should be uninformed of this mystery,
That temporary blindness hath occurred to Israel,
Until the fulness of the Gentiles is come in,
26. And then all Israel shall be saved.

This statement, however, was not before his readers during the extended argument which follows ver. 11; which, as a whole, must be taken to have somewhat of a hypothetical character, the apostle working his way, in some sense covertly, to his ultimate declaration. Perceiving what an occasion existed for the too probable exercise of a censorious and self-complacent spirit, he immediately proceeds to put them on their guard against it.

1. The apostle (ver. 11) tells the converted Gentiles that they should look kindly on unbelieving Jews, for two reasons; first, that Jewish unbelief was instrumental to the preaching of the Gospel to them; not absolutely—for the Gospel would have been preached to them under any circumstances—but more promptly and more extensively: see Acts xiii. 46. Secondly, that the privileges of Gentile Christians would have a tendency to excite Jewish unbelievers to emulation.

2. In ver. 12–15 the apostle goes on to say that a prospect of the ultimate conversion of the Jews as a nation might well be eminently grateful to Gentile Christians, since such an event would be highly conducive to the happiness of all nations.

The first of the three couplets of which this passage consists is incomplete, and requires the second member to be supplied. Ver. 13, 14 contain a subordinate thought giving the whole the form of an introverted parallelism.

The apostle here puts his argument into the form of a question (which, in substance, he thrice reiterates), as if its force were obvious, but without entering into details; yet it is scarcely obvious in what manner the ultimate conversion of the Jews would be so great a benefit to the Gentiles. Various conjectures may be formed on the subject, but, as these are conjectures merely, they are of little value. It may be wiser, perhaps, to content ourselves with the general sentiment, that if, in the course of God's mysterious providence, a calamity so great as the rejection of the Jews as a nation from the privileges of the Christian dispensation is

made instrumental to so great a blessing as the diffusion of the Gospel and the conversion of the Gentiles, it may justly be inferred that so grand a display of mercy as would be made in the national conversion and Christian reception of the Jews would be instrumental to the production of still greater benefits. What benefits these may be it will be for God in his time to show.

In ver. 13, 14, the apostle assigns a twofold reason why he presented and pressed this topic: the first, that his office as the apostle of the Gentiles gave him the right of admonishing them; the second, that the exhibition of right feelings by the Gentiles would tend to facilitate the conversion of the Jews.

3. Ver. 16 introduces another topic, and may be regarded as an answer to an objection which the apostle perceived as likely to arise; as if a Gentile convert had been ready to say —"Yes; but after such a rejection *can* a restoration be expected?" To this the apostle replies in substance, that the love of God to the Jews as a nation was by no means finally forfeited; and he adduces two metaphorical illustrations:—

XI. 16. For, if the corn of the firstfruit be holy, so also is the dough;
And if the root be holy, so also are the branches.

There is, of course, no reference in this passage to moral holiness, but to ceremonial holiness merely; that is, to the setting apart to peculiar privileges of the Israelitish nation. And the apostle's argument is that the chosen descendants of Abraham to the latest posterity will inherit the blessing of Abraham, just as the remotest branches of a tree will partake of the vitality of the root, or as the cake made of presented firstfruits will partake of their accepted sanctity: see Levit. xxiii. 10–13.

4. In ver. 17–21 the apostle deals with another too-probable manifestation of pride on the part of the Gentile converts. It seems to me that this passage is artistically constructed, its subject being placed in the centre, between the two branches into which it divides itself. The result is a kind of reversed introverted parallelism; a parallelism in which there is thrown into the centre, not, as is usual, a subordinate topic, but the principal one. I again set it before the eye of the reader.

XI. 17. And if some of the branches have been broken off,
And thou, a wild olive, hast been grafted in among them,
And with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree,
18. Glory not over the [broken] branches:
Or if thou glory, [remember thy position]—
Not thou bearest the root, but the root thee.
19. Thou wilt say, then,
The branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.
20. True: but because of unbelief they were broken off,
And thou holdest thy privilege by faith.
Be not, therefore, elated,
But be careful;
21. For, since God spared not the natural branches,
Take heed lest he also spare not thee.

For his purpose in this passage the apostle makes use of one of the metaphors he had just employed in ver. 16, that of the root and the branches; and he introduces his subject in ver. 19, by a supposition—"Thou wilt say, then," &c. The word "*then*" has a connective force in this manner. In ver. 16 the apostle had been replying to a supposition that the Jewish nation was finally cast off; and having denied this, he traces the conceited Gentile to the next ground open to him—"At any rate, some branches have been broken off that I might be grafted in."

To this he replies (in ver. 17, 18) first, that if it be so, it does not become the Gentile church to glory over the rejected nation; and secondly, that, if they should indulge so un-Christian a spirit, they may be reminded how little they have really to boast of, since, after all, they are not the root but branches merely—indebted to another for all their privileges.

In ver. 20, 21, the apostle takes up the same subject in another view. Retaining the same premises as are fully expressed in ver. 17, he reminds the Gentile church that an instrumental cause was at work here, of the influence of which they themselves should beware. If the Jewish nation had been rejected, it was for their unbelief; and, if the Gentile church had succeeded to their forfeited privilege, they held it by faith: so that there was no reason for high-mindedness, but rather for caution, since it was quite possible that the rule which had been applied to the Jew might be applied also to the Gentile. The fate of the early Gentile churches may now be cited in illustration of this caution.

The apostle then, in ver. 22, commends to them the true

view of the case, and exhorts the Gentiles to recognize in this mysterious dispensation both "the kindness and severity of God;" towards the rejected Jewish nation severity, but towards the Gentile church kindness—yet not kindness to be presumed upon, but conditioned on abiding faith.

XI. 22. Recognize herein both the kindness and the severity of God:
Towards those who have stumbled severity,
But towards thee the kindness of God;
If thou continue [by faith] in the privilege conferred,
Otherwise thou also wilt be cut off.

In ver. 23 and 24 the apostle intimates, first the possibility, and then the probability, of a Jewish national restoration to divine favour, thus advancing towards his great subject, and his ultimate assertion.

XI. 23. And they also, if they abide not in unbelief, shall be grafted in again;
For God is able to graft them in again.
24. For if thou wert cut out of the naturally wild olive tree,
And wert grafted contrary to nature into the good olive tree,
How much more easily shall the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?

When the apostle says that God is "able" to graft them in again, he means (according to the usual force of the phrase) that God is *willing;* or that such a deed was not beyond the scope, either of his power or of his grace. And by the latter part of the comparison he intimates that it might even be deemed much more likely that God should restore to favour his once and still beloved people, than that he should have taken into favour aliens and enemies.

Having thus prepared the way by hypothetical and probable suggestions, the apostle opens his grand positive declaration in ver. 25–27.

XI. 25. For I would not, brethren, that ye should be uninformed of this mystery,
Lest ye should have a high conceit of yourselves;
That temporary blindness hath occurred to Israel,
Until the fulness of the Gentiles is come in;
26. And then all Israel shall be saved.
As it is written—
There shall come out of Zion a deliverer,
And shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:
27. For this is my covenant unto them
When I shall take away their sins.

In the outset of this passage the apostle explains to his readers the reason why he had so carefully opened the subject to them; namely, that he perceived the danger they were in of having too high a conceit of themselves, to avoid which he had been particularly anxious that they should have a correct view of the matter.

Three facts are indicated in this prophecy: first, there is to be a large accession to the church of Christ from among the Gentiles; secondly, the blindness of Israel as a nation will continue until this ingathering shall be completed; thirdly, at this period Israel as a nation will be converted.

This is a very remarkable and important prophecy, going beyond anything in the Old Testament, both in the definiteness of its object, and the precise indication of the time. The event spoken of is clearly the *conversion* of the Jews, no reference being made by the apostle to their restoration to their own land; while the time is no less clearly that in which the great ingathering of the nations shall have been completed. The phrase "all Israel" must be taken not absolutely for every descendant of Abraham, nor, indeed, for every Israelite then living; but for Israel generally, or as a nation.

In the apostle's quotation which immediately follows, the passage principally had in view is Isa. lix. 20, 21, but the quotation is neither exact nor complete; nor is it easy to determine from what Scripture the last clause is taken—"when I shall take away their sin;" as probable a conjecture as any being that Jerem. xxxi. 33, 34 is referred to. Verbal variations may be resolved into the apostle's quoting from memory; but the great safeguard is that he wrote under the guidance of the Spirit of prophecy, with which he was himself endowed.

God's adorable Wisdom in this Dispensation: chap. xi. 28–36.

At this point the apostle seems to pause, while his readers utter an exclamation of surprise. "How strangely, then, God deals with his ancient people! He treats them both as enemies and as friends." Yes, replies Paul, and I will tell you why.

XI. 28. As to spiritual privileges they are treated as enemies for your sakes;
But as to their interest in God's favour they are still beloved for the fathers' sakes:
29. For the gifts and calling of God are irreversible.

When the apostle says that "the gifts and calling of God are ἀμεταμέλητα—*without repentance*," he means that in God there is no change of mind, or purpose; his favour to Israel "for the fathers' sakes" being unchangeable, while, for the sake of introducing the Gentiles to Gospel privileges, he was for a time treating them as enemies.

And the aspect of this dispensation, adds the apostle, exhibits a very remarkable analogy.

XI. 30. As in times past ye were disobedient to God,
But have now obtained mercy by occasion of their disobedience,
31. Even so have they, by occasion of the mercy shown to you, become disobedient;
32. So that they also become fit objects of mercy.
Thus God has found all to be disobedient,
So that all will be equally indebted to his grace.

Some difficulty in the rendering of this passage arises from the apostle's use of one word to denote different things. Twice in it does he employ the verb ἀπειθῶ, and twice the noun derived from it, ἀπειθεία; and he applies these words both to the Jews and the Gentiles. Now, in the case of the Jews the reference undoubtedly might be, and was, to their unbelief, or rejection of the Gospel; but it could not be so in the case of the Gentiles, and it manifestly was not so. It is necessary, therefore, to have recourse to the idea of disobedience, and to render all the terms in this sense; unbelief being, like other sins, an act of disobedience.

The idea which underlies the passage seems to be this: that, if the Jews had at once frankly and cordially received the Gospel as announcing a blessing to which they had been for many ages entitled, they would have acted a part worthy of commendation; but that, since they became petulant at the welcome of the Gentiles, and so rejected the Gospel, they acted a part so culpable that only by an exercise of mercy as rich as that which embraced the Gentiles could they be restored. Jew and Gentile, however previously distinguished, now stood on the same level of guilt. The general sense is, that God so ordered matters that the disobedience of all secured to him the glory of the mercy shown to all.

It is in relation to this aspect of the divine ways that the apostle breaks out into the ardent strain which immediately follows :—

XI. 33. O the unfathomable riches both of the wisdom and skilfulness of God!
How unsearchable are his judgments,
And his ways past finding out!
34. For who hath known the mind of the Lord?
Or who hath been his counsellor?
35. Or who hath first given to him that it may be repaid him again?
36. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things;
To whom be glory for ever. Amen.

Critically, here is a magnificent piece of parallelistic composition—as fine, perhaps, as any found in the New Testament. It is in obvious imitation of the more poetical parts of the Old Testament, but it is not a quotation from them; it is an original composition in their spirit, and it clearly evinces Paul's intimate acquaintance and familiarity with the parallelistic style.

In sentiment, one almost wonders at the grandeur of the utterance when compared with the subject which gave occasion to it. Not, indeed, that the subject is without interest. God's treatment of Jew and Gentile as here exhibited was a wonderful display of profound and unsearchable wisdom, and a glorious illustration of his blended sovereignty and grace; yet the apostle, in a manner not unusual with him, seems to rise from a particular dispensation to a general view of the divine ways; and the quick expansion of his vision fully accounts for the ardour of his emotion.

The noticeable feature in God's dealing with Israel was this: that, just when the fulfilment of his gracious design towards that nation seemed to be impending, it was, contrary to all expectation, put aside to make way for the reception of the Gentiles; God only waiting, however, for the accomplishment of this part of his plan, to show his utmost mercy to the Jewish nation, and by this delay in consequence of their haughty resentment of his grace to the Gentiles, illustrating the richness of the mercy he exercised.

I now append to this portion a general scheme of the argument conducted in it.

General Scheme.

The subject is Christianity in the world—prevailingly rejected by Jews, largely received by Gentiles.

Introduction—profession of ardent love to the Jews: ch. ix. 1, 5.

I. Of the causes of this state of things: ch. ix. 6–33.

1. Of the primary cause, or God's sovereignty: ch. ix. 6–29.

a. God's exercise of sovereignty vindicated from the charge of promise-breaking: ch. ix. 6–13 and 27–29.

(*a*) By the distinction of the spiritual seed: ch. ix. 6.

(*b*) By the characteristic sovereignty of God's dealings with Israel: ch. ix. 7–13; and 27–29.

b. God's exercise of sovereignty vindicated from the charge of injustice: ch. ix. 14–26.

2. Of the secondary cause, or Jewish unbelief: ch. ix. 30–33.

II. Of the great stumbling-block, or the universal preaching of the Gospel: ch. x. 1–18.

1. Jews may be saved by their own Scriptures: ch. x. 1–10.

2. But the universal preaching of the Gospel is necessary for the Gentiles: ch. x. 11–18.

III. Of the facts in their scriptural aspect: ch. x. 19 to xi. *fin.*

1. The facts were foreseen and foretold: ch. x. 19–21.

2. A remnant of Israel is saved: ch. xi. 1–10.

3. The whole nation will be ultimately converted: ch. xi. 11–27.

4. God's adorable wisdom in this dispensation: ch. xi. 28–36.

Section II.—*Of Sanctification:* chap. xii. to xv. 7.

XII. 1. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the tender mercies of God,
To present yourselves to him a living sacrifice,
Holy, acceptable to God:
A rational service from you.

XII. 2. Also do not conform yourselves to this world,
But transform yourselves by the renovation of your mind,
That you may exemplify the will of God,
The good, the acceptable, and the perfect.
3. Further, in virtue of the office conferred upon me, I enjoin on every [gifted] person among you,
Not to exalt himself above due measure,
But to conduct himself modestly,
Because it is God who hath dealt to every man the measure of supernatural power.
4. Now, as in one body we have many members,
And all members have not the same function,
5. So we, being many, constitute one body as Christians,
And are diversely adapted to each other's benefit.
6. Having, then, diversified gifts according to the position conferred on us,
[Let us severally use them for the edification of all.]
If we have the gift of prophecy, let us restrict it to the truth revealed to us;
7. If we have talents for service, let us actively employ them.
He who teacheth, let him be fervent in teaching;
8. He who exhorteth, let him be earnest in exhortation.
He who distributeth alms, let him do it with impartiality;
He who conducteth affairs, let him do it with diligence;
He who visiteth the sick, let him do it with promptness.
9. Cultivate undissembled benevolence.
Avoid whatever is injurious,
Pursue whatever is useful.
10. In brotherly love be tenderly affectionate towards one another,
In offices of kindness emulate one another.
11. Do not avoid active services;
Cherish fervent devoutness;
Serve the Lord.
12. Rejoice in hope;
Be patient in tribulation;
Continue instant in prayer.
13. Relieve the necessities of saints;
Be freely hospitable to them.
14. Bless those who persecute you;
Bless them, but do not curse them.
15. Rejoice with those who rejoice,
Weep with those who weep.
16. Cultivate mutual concord.
Do not aspire after high things,
But respect the meanest of your brethren.
Be not tenacious of your own opinion.
17. Return to no one evil for evil.
Study amiableness towards all men.
18. If possible (as much as lieth in you) live peaceably with all men.

XII. 19. Avenge not yourselves, dearly beloved;
But rather allow the course of [divine] wrath:
For it is written, Retribution is my part;
I will recompense, saith the Lord.
20. For this purpose, if thine enemy hunger, feed him,
If he thirst, give him drink;
For by so doing thou wilt heap coals of fire on his head.
21. Be not overcome by evil,
But overcome evil by good.
XIII. 1. Let every person be obedient to the governing authorities;
For there is no government but of God.
Existing governments are instituted by God.
2. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth government resisteth an institution of God:
And those who resist will expose themselves to just punishment.
3. Now rulers are not intended as a terror to well-conducted persons
But to ill-conducted persons.
Wilt thou, therefore, not be afraid of the ruler?
Conduct thyself well, and thou mayest expect praise from him,
4. For he is a minister of God to thee for good:
But if thou conduct thyself ill, be afraid of him;
For he cannot be expected to bear the sword in vain,
Since he is an avenging minister of God for the punishment of evildoers.
5. Ye must needs be obedient, however,
Not only through fear of punishment, but also through sense of duty.
6. For the same reason, also, pay ye the public imposts;
For [both rulers and collectors] are God's ministers attending to this matter.
7. Render to all their dues:
Tribute to whom tribute is due,
Custom to whom custom,
Fear to whom fear,
Honour to whom honour.
8. You owe no man anything but to love one another;
For he that loveth another hath fulfilled [the second table of] the law.
9. For these commandments—
Thou shalt not commit adultery,
Thou shalt not kill,
Thou shalt not steal,
Thou shalt not covet—
And if there be any other [similar] commandment,
In one precept all are comprehended,
In this—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
10. He that loveth his neighbour doeth him no harm;
Therefore love is the fulfilment of the law.

XIII. 11. And this more especially considering the advanced period [of our Christian profession,
Which warns us] that it is now high time to arouse ourselves from slumber;
Since our knowledge of the Gospel is more perfect than when we entered on it.
12. The night has passed away, and the day has come;
Let us, therefore, cast off entirely raiment fitted only to darkness,
And clothe ourselves in a manner adapted to the light.
13. As in the day-time, let us behave ourselves decorously,
Not in rioting and drunkenness,
Not in chambering and wantonness,
Not in strife and envying;
14. But imitate ye the Lord Jesus Christ,
And do not let the business of your life be sensual enjoyment.
XIV. 1. Him who is weak in the faith receive ye [into fellowship],
But do not eagerly discuss non-essential points.
2. One believeth that he may eat all things;
Another, who is weak, eateth only herbs.
3. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not;
And let not him that eateth not condemn him that eateth:
For God hath accepted him.
[For he is another man's servant.]
4. Who art thou that condemnest another man's servant?
By [the judgment of] his own master he standeth or falleth:
Yea, [the strong brother] shall be sustained,
For the Lord will sustain him.
5. One esteemeth one day above another,
Another esteemeth all days alike.
Let every one make up his own mind.
6. He that regardeth the day, according to [his view of] the will of the Lord he regardeth it,
And he that regardeth not the day, according to [his view of] the will of the Lord he regardeth it not.
He that eateth meat, according to [his view of] the will of the Lord he eateth,
For he giveth God thanks:
And he that eateth not meat, according to [his view of] the will of the Lord he eateth not,
And he also giveth God thanks.
7. For none of us liveth according to his own will,
And none of us dieth according to his own will:
8. But whether we live, we live according to the will of the Lord,
Or whether we die, we die according to the will of the Lord:
Whether, therefore, we live or die, we are subject to the will of the Lord.
9. To this end, indeed, Christ both died and rose again,
That he might have dominion over both the dead and the living.

XIV. 10. But why dost thou, on the one hand, condemn thy brother?
Or why dost thou, on the other hand, despise thy brother?
For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God:
11. For it is written—
As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,
And every tongue shall confess to God.
12. So, then, every one of us shall give an account of himself to God.
13. No longer, therefore, let us condemn one another;
But act ye rather on this principle, not to present to a brother a stumbling-block, or an occasion of sin.
14. I am certain, by the will of the Lord Jesus, that no food is unclean in itself;
To him who regards food as unclean, however, it is unclean.
15. Now, if thy brother be ensnared by thy food,
Thou art not acting kindly [to eat it.]
Do not by thy food injure one for whom Christ died.
16. Let not thy right [to eat] be so asserted as to expose thee to censure.
17. Practical Christianity consisteth not in eating and drinking [food of any kind];
But in uprightness, kindness, and holy joy.
18. For the rest, he who doeth what he believeth to be the will of Christ is accepted by God,
And worthy of approbation by men.
19. Let us thus pursue the course most conducive to peace,
And to the edification of one another.
Do not for a sensual indulgence obstruct the progress of the Gospel.
20. All kinds of food, indeed, are clean;
But he committeth sin who, by eating them, causeth mischief.
21. It is commendable neither to eat meat, nor to drink wine,
Nor to do anything by which thy brother stumbleth, or is ensnared, or enfeebled.
22. Hast thou full persuasion [of thy liberty]?
Use it for thyself in the sight of God:
Happy is he who exposeth not himself to censure in exercising his liberty.
23. He who doubteth, however, is guilty if he eat,
Because he eateth without full persuasion [of his liberty]:
For whatever is done without full persuasion of its rectitude is sinful.
XV. 1. Further, we who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak,
And not to pursue a course of self-pleasing.
2. Every one should rather please his neighbour [than himself],
For his benefit, to his edification.
3. Thus even Christ pleased not himself:
But [in his life it was] as it is written:
The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

XV. 4. Now the ancient Scriptures were written for our instruction,
That we, by patience and comfort derived from the Scriptures, might cherish this hope.
5. Now the God of patience and comfort grant you to feel towards each other as Jesus Christ felt;
6. That unanimously, without disputes, ye may worship God,
Even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
7. Wherefore receive ye one another,
As also Christ hath received us,
To the glory of God.

The apostle here resumes the subject of sanctification in a manner strikingly different from that in which he formerly treated it. In the 6th and 7th chapters he argued from several grounds the necessity of holiness, and opened the believer's experience in relation to it; now he enters at once on the practical aspect of Christian life, and presents to us a noble array of evangelical precepts. In these three chapters we have Christian duty exhibited under several heads.

We have, first, the general scope of Christian duty, in chap. xii. 1, 2.

We have, secondly, the duties of Christian fellowship, in chap. xii. 3–8.

We have, thirdly, the Christian's personal duties, in chap. xii. 9–21.

We have, fourthly, the Christian's political duty, in chap. xiii. 1–7.

We have, fifthly, the Christian's social duty, in chap. xiii. 8–10.

We have, sixthly, the Christian's duty before the world, in chap. xiii. 11–14.

We have, seventhly, the Christian's duty to weak brethren, in chap. xiv. to chap. xv. 7.

The General Scope of Christian Duty: chap. xii. 1, 2.

XII. 1. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the tender mercies of God,
To present yourselves to him a living sacrifice,
Holy, acceptable to God:
A rational service from you.
2. Also, do not conform yourselves to this world,
But transform yourselves by the renovation of your mind,
That you may exemplify the will of God,
The good, the acceptable, and the perfect.

The general scope of Christian duty is here presented by the apostle in two practical aspects, enforced on a common evangelical ground. "I beseech you," he says, "by the tender mercies of God." He no doubt refers here to the early portion of the Epistle, and his statement therein of Christian doctrine and privilege. The distinctly evangelical attitude of his practical exhortations is to be noticed, and noticed as applicable to the whole of them. The appropriate and all-powerful motives are thus supplied.

Of the two aspects under which the general scope of Christian duty is here presented, the one is positive the other is negative; the first enforces devotedness to God (ver. 1), the second nonconformity to the world (ver. 2).

Of Devotedness to God: chap. xii. 1.

There runs through this verse a general idea which may serve as a key to its several parts. The apostle has evidently in his mind a reference to the Jewish ritual, and a view of the blended similarity and superiority to it which was characteristic of Christian consecration. As by that ritual sacrifices of thank-offering were presented to God, so might the Christian consecration to God be regarded as a sacrifice, an entire devotedness; but it was altogether a sacrifice of a nobler kind—as, 1, consisting of themselves, not an animal; as, 2, being a living sacrifice, not a slain one; as, 3, being a morally holy one, not ceremonially so; as, 4, being an eminently acceptable one; and as, 5, being an intelligent, and not merely a ritual one.

Of Nonconformity to the World: chap. xii. 2.

Such was the positive aspect of the Christian's duty as presented by the apostle; but another view of it was to be taken. He was to be not "conformed to this world." By the phrase αἰῶν τοῦτο—"this world"—I understand the prevailing morals and manners of the age, which were, of course, the one idolatrous and the other profligate, and which would naturally exercise a powerful influence over professing Christians, especially as themselves recently emancipated from similar habits. To this influence the believer should oppose a resistance both direct and indirect.

The direct resistance—"Do not conform yourselves to the prevailing morals and manners"—would not consist of the assumption of singularity for the sake of differing from others. The spirit of the precept is, Do not be ruled by example, but test it by reference to the will and glory of God.

The indirect resistance was to consist of a positive effort of transformation; a practical change of deportment as compared with their recent state of paganism, and arising out of that renovation of the mind which every Christian must be assumed to have experienced under the influence of the Gospel. This inward and vital change should supply strength for a continual effort and progress, not only of nonconformity but of transformation, making the believer widely different from what he once was, and keeping him from becoming like to those around him.

To quicken the Christian to this effort of transformation, the apostle sets before him an interesting and important object to be answered by it: he would thus exemplify in the sight of the world "the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God;" in other words, he would show the world how excellent a thing true holiness was, and thus at once honour and promote Christianity.

The Duties of Christian Fellowship: chap. xii. 3–8.

XII. 3. Further, in virtue of the office conferred upon me, I enjoin
on every [gifted] person among you
Not to exalt himself above due measure,
But to conduct himself modestly;
Because it is God who hath dealt to every man the measure
of supernatural power.
4. Now, as in one body we have many members,
And all members have not the same function;
5. So we, being many, constitute one body as Christians,
And are diversely adapted to each other's benefit.
6. Having, then, diversified gifts according to the position conferred on us,
[Let us severally use them for the edification of all.]
If we have the gift of prophecy, let us restrict it to the truth
revealed to us;
7. If we have talents for service, let us actively employ them.
He who teacheth, let him be fervent in teaching;
8. He who exhorteth, let him be earnest in exhortation.
He who distributeth alms, let him do it with impartiality;
He who conducteth affairs, let him do it with diligence;
He who visiteth the sick, let him do it with promptness.

That in the passage now before us the apostle treats of such duties as sprang out of the union of Christians in church-fellowship is obvious; but a question immediately arises whether he refers to the members of a church universally, or only to a peculiar class of them—the supernaturally-gifted members.

Now it is undoubtedly a fact—and a fact which strikingly illustrates both the wisdom and goodness of God—that in the commencement of Christianity, immediately on the gathering together of a company of disciples, there was poured out, not upon all but upon some of them, the influence of the Holy Spirit in a peculiar form; not only in the form in which it produced repentance and its holy fruits—this was common to all—but in a form in which it conferred unusual capabilities, commonly called supernatural gifts, as the gift of tongues, of miracles, &c. The church at Corinth was an eminent example of this, see 1 Cor. xii. 14; but the same benefit was enjoyed by all. The adaptation of this method to the wants of the churches, and indeed its necessity, are by a little consideration rendered evident. Naturally the possession of these extraordinary gifts conferred distinction and pre-eminence on such members of the church as possessed them, but it does not appear that the possession of them constituted church officers, though it is probable that, when officers—pastors and deacons—came afterwards to be chosen, they were for a time chosen from among the gifted brethren.

To return from these general remarks to the passage before us. No doubt a body of gifted members existed in the church at Rome, and it is certain that they would not be omitted from such practical precepts as the apostle is now delivering; in part, therefore, this passage must be taken as applying to them—which, indeed, some of its phraseology plainly indicates: but it may yet be thought that, as some of the instances specified—such as giving alms and visiting the sick—scarcely required miraculous endowments, the reference of the apostle may have been more extensive, and may in fact have included the members at large.

Regarded in this light the passage divides itself into two parts. The first is addressed to the gifted members, and is a caution against pride, to them, no doubt, an easily-besetting sin.

XII. 3. Further, in virtue of the office conferred upon me, I enjoin
on every [gifted] person among you
Not to exalt himself above due measure,
But to conduct himself modestly;
Because it is God who hath dealt to every man the measure
of supernatural power.

I have used some freedom in the rendering of this passage, but not more, I think, than the exigency of the passage requires. The nature of the subject seems to demand the insertion of the word "gifted" in the first line. More objection may be felt to rendering πίστις—"faith"—by the phrase "supernatural power;" but when it is recollected that the power of working miracles is frequently called faith, little objection will, perhaps, be felt to extend the word in this instance to supernatural power generally. The sense then is that, because the supernatural endowments were distributed among them by God, they were no credit to themselves, and could afford no food for pride.

Then begins the second part of the passage, in which the apostle addresses the whole church, and urges a regard to mutual edification, enforcing his plea by an apt comparison:—

XII. 4. Now, as in one body we have many members,
And all members have not the same function;
5. So we, being many, constitute one body as Christians,
And are diversely adapted to each other's benefit.

In the rendering of the last clause I have taken a considerable liberty; but, as I think, one neither unnecessary nor unwarranted. The clause as it stands in our English version—"Every one members one of another"—is quite unintelligible; nor is a literal translation of the original easy, if possible:—ὅ δὲ καθ' εἷς ἀλλήλων μέλη. When, however, we come to ask what idea is here required in order to complete the sentence, the answer is obvious. What the apostle says is that, as in the natural body, in which there are many *members*—that is, parts adapted to usefulness—and these of diversified adaptation; so in the spiritual body, in which there are many persons, all these are *members*—that is, parts adapted to usefulness—and diversely adapted to the benefit of the whole. The exigency of the passage, consequently, may be pleaded in support of the free rendering I have given. It is at all events better, I think, than the plan adopted by some eminent critics, of tearing away from its

connexion the former part of ver. 6, in order to complete by it the apparently imperfect comparison of ver. 4 and 5.

The figure of the body and the members has two important bearings. On the one hand, it teaches that the most distinguished individuals are *but members* of the Christian body, and should consider usefulness their highest function; and on the other hand, it teaches that the humblest individuals *are members*, and may find some opportunity of rendering service.

Having thus prepared the way by his beautiful and suggestive comparison, the apostle proceeds to make his application of it in the following manner:—

XII. 6. Having, then, diversified gifts according to the position conferred on us,
[Let us severally use them for the edification of all.]
If we have the gift of prophecy, let us restrict it to the truth revealed to us:
7. If we have talents for service, let us actively employ them.
He who teacheth, let him be fervent in teaching;
8. He who exhorteth, let him be earnest in exhortation;
He who distributeth alms, let him do it with impartiality;
He who conducteth affairs, let him do it with diligence;
He who visiteth the sick, let him do it with promptness.

In pondering this passage, it becomes evident that the first member of it is imperfect, a second line being required in order to bring forward the general idea from the preceding verses. The word "gifts" in the beginning (ver. 6) must be understood (as critically it may be) of qualifications for usefulness generally, whether supernatural or ordinary. The gift of "prophecy," as appears from other places, was not the power of foretelling events, but the wisdom to declare Gospel doctrine; and to prophesy *κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως* —"according to the analogy of the faith"—could scarcely be to regulate such declarations by kindred knowledge derived from other sources: it must rather be to limit them strictly to the matter revealed, and not to suffer mere opinion to be blended with it. The word "ministry" in ver. 7 should be understood in the sense of useful service of all kinds—*διακονία*; the qualifications for which would be rather ordinary than supernatural. "Teaching" and "exhortation" (ver. 7, 8) are obviously only two modes of instruction; the former may be supposed to be doctrinal, the latter practical; and the idea is one—namely, that the supernatural endow-

ment should be sedulously employed, and not wasted by indolence. The remaining three items seem to refer to various kinds of service—to the distribution of alms, to the conduct of affairs, and to the visiting of the sick; functions which did not require supernatural endowments, and in the discharge of which, especially before the organization of a church with its proper officers—pastors and deacons—the members at large would naturally take part.

The Christian's Personal Duties: chap. xii. ver. 9–21.

On a first perusal, the precepts which occupy the latter part of the twelfth chapter appear to be wholly without arrangement, and thrown together in inextricable confusion. It can hardly be supposed, however, that there was absolutely *no* connexion between them in the apostle's mind; and the attempt to discover and lay hold on the thread must not, therefore, be wholly abandoned. Some light in this respect may be derived from a circumstance which, on first sight, appears to increase the perplexity, namely, that similar topics occur a second time. Now this kind of duplicate reference is a familiar feature of parallelism, of the existence of which in the whole passage, consequently, it may be accepted as an indication. I venture, then, with some improved renderings, to place the precepts in the following order, associating those which belong to similar subjects.

The Christian's Duty towards all Men.

XII. 9. Cultivate undissembled benevolence.
Avoid whatever is injurious;
Pursue whatever is useful.
17. Return to no one evil for evil.
Study amiableness towards all men.
18. If possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

The Christian's Duty towards his Fellow-Christians.

10. In brotherly love be tenderly affectionate towards one another.
In offices of kindness emulate one another.
15. Rejoice with those who rejoice,
Weep with those who weep.
16. Cultivate mutual concord.
Do not aspire after high things;
But respect the meanest of your brethren.
Be not tenacious of your own opinion.

The Christian's Duty towards God.

XII. 11. Do not avoid active services.
Cherish fervent devoutness.
Serve the Lord.

The Christian's Duty under Persecution.

12. Rejoice in hope;
Be patient in tribulation;
Continue instant in prayer.
13. Relieve the necessities of saints;
Be freely hospitable to them.

The Christian's Duty towards Persecutors.

14. Bless those who persecute you;
Bless, but do not curse them.
19. Avenge not yourselves, dearly beloved,
But rather allow the course of divine wrath:
For it is written, Retribution is my part;
I will recompense, saith the Lord.
20. For this purpose, if thine enemy hunger, feed him,
If he thirst, give him drink:
For by so doing thou wilt heap coals of fire on his head.
21. Be not overcome by evil,
But overcome evil by good.

Postponing for the present all remarks on the precepts in detail, I would in the first place indicate the general structure of the passage as thus exhibited.

By placing together cognate precepts, they are found to relate to five subjects, in the following order: 1, the Christian's duty to all men, ver. 9, 17, 18; 2, the Christian's duty to his fellow-Christians, ver. 10, 15, 16; 3, the Christian's duty towards God, ver. 11; 4, the Christian's duty under persecution, ver. 12, 13; 5, the Christian's duty towards persecutors, ver. 14, 19, 20, 21. Of these the third—the Christian's duty towards God—is but once referred to; all the rest—for ver. 12, 13 are scarcely an exception—are referred to twice, after the usual duplicate manner.

Taking up these five topics simply, they naturally fall under the following arrangement: the principal topic—the Christian's duty towards God—is the third, and is thus placed in the middle, though in the order of thought the

first. From this starting point, if we go backwards we find first the Christian's duty to his fellow-Christians, and next the Christian's duty towards all men: and if from the same point we go forwards, we find first the Christian's duty under persecution, and next the Christian's duty towards persecutors. The topics, then, are found to be in an unexpected but admirable order, of the following kind.

A. General duties. { 3. The Christian's duties towards all men.
2. The Christian's duty to his fellow-Christians.

1. The Christian's duty towards God.

B. Special duties. { 4. The Christian's duty under persecution.
5. The Christian's duty towards persecutors.

Here is clearly artistical composition, and a parallelism of great beauty; a second example of what I have already called a reverse introverted parallelism, the principal topic not admitting of division.

In detail the precepts will be more advantageously treated in the order into which they are thus thrown.

1. *The Christian's Duty towards God:* ver. 11.

XII. 11. Do not avoid active services.
Cherish fervent devoutness.
Serve the Lord.

In contemplating this comprehensive and important group of precepts, the best way, perhaps, is to take the last of the three as the principal and the first two as subordinate. We have then the Christian's duty towards God in the following order.

a. Serve the Lord.

This precept inculcates (1) a recognition of God's providential ordination in the various circumstances and relations of life. It means, fulfil every duty *as to the Lord.* (2) A supreme regard to the will of God in all circumstances; making it, in opposition to all other authorities or influences, the rule of life. (3) A constant reference to his glory in whatever mode it might be promoted by them.

b. Cherish fervent devoutness.

This precept evidently relates to the habitual state of

mind, and inculcates the carrying of religious affections into worldly affairs. That an habitual fervour of spirit is to a Christian of great advantage and importance is obvious, as a source both of religious happiness and religious influence, whether in duty, in pleasure, or in trial. That it needs some effort to cultivate it is also obvious; and the means by which it is to be cultivated are not hidden. Frequent religious meditation, enlarged communion with God, and a watchful and prayerful habit, are the means adapted to the end.

c. Do not avoid active services.

Our translators seem to refer this precept to the general activities of life; but, although it is quite true that in this sense Christians should not be slothful, it is scarcely to be discerned how, in this sense, any temptation to slothfulness should beset Christians at large. It seems better to understand it of that class of activities by which the cause of Christ in the world might be promoted, and of which at that period it stood in special need. To such activities the first Christians might generally be unapt, both from the influence of previous habits, and from the frowning aspect of both Jewish and Gentile malice. The spirit of the precept might perhaps be given, if we were to read it thus—"Do not *shrink from* active services." In this sense the precept is still applicable.

It is, perhaps, possible that, in this group of precepts there may be a reference to the spirit of monasticism, which might then already be beginning to work.

2. *The Christian's Duty to his Fellow-Christians.*

XII. 10. In brotherly love be tenderly affectionate towards one another.
In offices of kindness emulate one another.
15. Rejoice with those who rejoice;
Weep with those who weep.
16. Cultivate mutual concord.
Do not aspire after high things,
But respect the meanest of your brethren.
Be not tenacious of your own opinion.

The first of these precepts relates to the love appropriate to the relation of Christian brethren, in which the apostle enjoins tenderness of affection. When it is considered under

what circumstances the members of the first churches were brought together, it may be easily seen that their mutual love might be wanting in this respect. The precept stands opposed (1) to unkindness; (2) to indifference. The language is not stronger than the relation of Christian brethren warrants.

Of the second of these precepts I have given a rendering very different from that of our translators, but I have done so on the best critical authority. The word τιμῇ, honour, denotes also humanity, offices of kindness; a meaning in this connexion much more appropriate. The apostle's idea seems to be that, in offices of kindness, each should endeavour according to his ability to set an example to his brethren, while every one also should endeavour, not merely to imitate, but to surpass the example set, by a holy rivalry of benevolence.

The third of these precepts enjoins a sympathizing spirit, alike with the joyful and the sorrowful. Such a spirit stands opposed to a very prevalent form of selfishness, and is a natural expression of tender love.

The fourth precept, which I have expressed more briefly than our translators—"Cultivate mutual concord"—sets Christians upon their guard against the mischiefs too likely to result from diverse antecedent habits and modes, when persons are brought into so close a union as is constituted by church fellowship. It is clear that, in such an assembly, there can be neither cordiality nor peace without a general exercise of mutual forbearance and concession. If every one be tenacious of his own views and wishes, grievances and offences must ensue. A most important practical precept, therefore, is given by the apostle when he says, "Cultivate mutual concord." It is as though he had said—"In great things you agree; mind that you do not disagree in trifles. Brought together as you are, there will be among you many different opinions; but do not be tenacious of them. Agree in what is agreeable to others."

The fifth precept is one of obvious and important bearing. In a Christian church there might be—there probably, or certainly, were—both rich and poor, persons of rank and the ignoble there mixed together, so far as religious privileges were concerned, in perfect equality. The natural tendencies of outside society, however, might show themselves in the

church; and some might "aspire after high things," or show themselves ambitious of high position, treating with neglect, or even with discourtesy, the poorer members. Against evils of this class the precept is directed.

3. *The Christian's Duty towards all Men.*

XII. 9. Cultivate undissembled benevolence.
Avoid whatever is injurious;
Pursue whatever is useful.
17. Return to no one evil for evil.
Study amiableness towards all men.
18. If possible (as much as lieth in you), live peaceably with all men.

In the first of these precepts the general topic is first delivered, and the two particulars into which it is divisible follow. It is undoubtedly of universal benevolence that the apostle here speaks; and when he enjoins that it should be "undissembled," he only recognizes the facility with which we may love "in word and in tongue," rather than in deed and in truth. He recommends a benevolence which is practical. In the latter part of this precept the words of our version are not happy. It exhibits simply the positive and negative aspects of practical benevolence—"Whatever is injurious to those around you avoid, and pursue whatever is beneficial." How appropriate and important a precept this is need not be insisted on; nor in how striking and advantageous a contrast it would place the professors of Christianity with the disciples of paganism.

The latter portion of the passage before us contains three separate but cognate precepts, all grouping themselves under the general head of benevolence. The first of these relates to its direct opposite, resentment, or rendering evil for evil; of this natural and universally-prevalent habit the apostle strictly enjoins the mortification. The second of these our translators have rendered "Provide things *honest* in the sight of all men," but I think incorrectly. It is better to take the more general meaning of the word καλός, and to regard the precept as relating to things of good repute, as in Phil. iv. 8. On consideration, however, I prefer the idea of *amiableness;* an idea equally just, and more appropriate to the connexion. The importance of this precept to the characteristic expression of Christianity and its honour in the

world, is manifest. The third of these precepts relates to the preservation of social peace. It recognizes the existence of two parties, by either of whom peace may be broken; and accordingly the precept is qualified by the following phrase —"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you." If peace must be broken, let it never be the fault of the disciple of Christ; either by giving offence, or by too quickly taking it.

4. *The Christian's Duty under Persecution.*

XII. 12. Rejoice in hope.
Be patient in tribulation.
Continue instant in prayer.
13. Relieve the necessities of saints:
Be freely hospitable to them.

It is the general idea of the commentators, and I suppose a just one, that this passage relates to the persecuted condition of the early Christians. It is an undoubted fact that they were subject to persecution, and it is in the highest degree probable that some precepts adapted to this aspect of their condition would be given them; to which it may be added, both that these now before us are highly appropriate, and that their interpretation in this sense is almost required by those which follow, and which refer evidently to persecutors.

In this view the passage before us resolves itself into two parts, the former indicating the duty of Christians who suffer persecution, and the latter their duty towards persecuted brethren.

The duty of Christians under persecution is pointed out in three short but pregnant precepts.

1. "Rejoice in hope." This leads the thoughts away from the scene of present suffering to the sinless and sorrowless world; and implies that Christians had not so much to look for deliverance on earth, as to sustain themselves by anticipation of triumph in heaven.

2. "Be patient in tribulation." The appropriateness of this exhortation is manifest. It teaches Christians to suffer without fretfulness or repining; to acknowledge the hand of God even in the rage of persecutors, and to submit to it as to his will.

3. "Continue instant in prayer." This leads the sufferer to the great source of his help, the throne of grace. There the weakest are strong, and the most timid become bold. And Christians had need to be aware lest persecution should decoy them from that secure and privileged position.

These precepts may advantageously be taken in an inverse order.

After thus pointing out the duty of the persecuted themselves, the apostle adverts to the duties of others towards the persecuted. The precept in ver. 13 cannot be satisfactorily understood of the general duties of hospitality and charity, but seems to relate to the special case of brethren reduced to want by persecution, or driven from their homes into exile. To them the hearts and homes of their brethren should be freely open.

5. *The Duty of Christians towards Persecutors.*

XII. 14. Bless those who persecute you;
Bless, but do not curse them.

19. Avenge not yourselves, dearly beloved,
But rather allow the course of [divine] wrath.
For it is written, Retribution is my part,
I will recompense, saith the Lord.

20. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him;
If he thirst, give him drink:
For in so doing thou wilt heap coals of fire on his head.

21. Be not overcome by evil,
But overcome evil by good.

The duty of Christians towards their persecutors is here introduced by a positive precept of great force and beauty: "Bless those who persecute you;" and a caution is added against indulgence in the too natural opposite of this—"Bless them, but do not curse them."

The structure of the passage in ver. 19–21 is to be carefully observed. As a whole it constitutes an introverted parallelism, consisting of two precepts, which are placed first and last, and are supported by two reasons, which are placed between them. It is not easy to present this to the eye, but the structure may be readily traced. The first precept is this:—

Avenge not yourselves, dearly beloved,
But rather allow the course of [divine] wrath.

The second precept concludes the passage, and is as follows :—

> Be not overcome by evil,
> But overcome evil by good.

The reason supporting the first precept is expressed in these terms :—

> For it is written, Retribution is my part,
> I will recompense, saith the Lord.

The reason supporting the second precept is conveyed in the following form :—

> For this purpose, if thine enemy hunger, feed him,
> If he thirst, give him drink:
> For by so doing thou wilt heap coals of fire on his head.

The whole passage may be arranged in the following manner :—

XII. 19. Avenge not yourselves, dearly beloved,
But rather allow the course of divine wrath.
For it is written, Retribution is my part,
I will recompense, saith the Lord.

20. For this purpose, if thine enemy hunger, feed him,
If he thirst, give him drink:
For by so doing thou wilt heap coals of fire on his head.

21. Be not overcome by evil,
But overcome evil by good.

The structure is rare, perhaps unique, but it certainly accords with the principles of parallelism.

In considering the first precept, a doubt requires to be solved respecting the meaning of the phrase δότε τόπον τῇ ὀργῇ, literally rendered "Give place unto wrath." I have no hesitation in agreeing with those who refer it, not to the anger of man, but to the anger of God, as is plainly demanded, I think, by that which follows. The sense then will be—"Avenge not yourselves, dearly beloved; but rather allow God to avenge you."

A quotation is here made from Deut. xxxii. 35: and the sentiment is, not only that God will actually avenge his people, so that they may safely leave their wrongs with him, but that it is his province to avenge, a province with which those who suffer wrong ought not to interfere.

The second precept goes considerably beyond the first—"Overcome evil by good." It is, however, quite plain; and the illustration of it has no difficulty but what arises from

the phrase, "By so doing thou wilt heap coals of fire on his head."

The natural interpretation of this metaphor (which occurs only once in the Sacred Scriptures, Prov. xxv. 21) is, that, as heaping coals of fire on a person's head would cause him extreme pain, if not fatal injury, so the accumulation of benefits on one who has injured you would, *if he were not subdued by them*, entail upon him very painful consequences, or more aggravated divine punishment. There is here implied, of course, no *intention* of such a consequence; which would be at utter variance with the spirit of the context. It is, moreover, a consequence which could only conditionally ensue; on the condition, namely, of the injurious party not being subdued by kindness. The meaning is that such an accumulation of benefits would place an enemy altogether in the wrong, or in a position in which, if he did not repent, he *would deserve* a severe punishment; and would so be doing all that could be done for his reformation.

I much prefer this interpretation to that which suggests a metallurgic metaphor, as illustrating the melting influence of kindness.

The Christian's Political Duty: chap. xiii. 1–7.

The subject of these verses is very definitely marked out; and, important always, it was, no doubt, of special importance at that period. No charge was more frequently or more effectively brought against the first Christians than that of sedition; a charge into which it was but too easy to misinterpret, whether intentionally or unintentionally, their avowed adherence to "another king, one Jesus." Upon general grounds, indeed, it was of great importance to define clearly at the outset of Christianity the relation which it held to the existing governments of the world; since, if it really did involve the generation of political malcontents and a crusade against political institutions, the rulers of that and of every age would but find too easy a justification, not merely of jealous watchfulness, but of severe repression.

The apostle treats the subject in the following manner:—

XIII. 1. Let every person be obedient to the governing authorities:
For there is no government but of God.
Existing governments are instituted by God.

XIII. 2. Whoever, therefore, resisteth government resisteth an institution of God;
And those who resist will expose themselves to just punishment.
3. Now rulers are not intended as a terror to well-conducted persons,
But to ill-conducted persons.
Wilt thou, therefore, not be afraid of the ruler?
Conduct thyself well, and thou mayest expect praise from him,
4. For he is a minister of God to thee for good:
But if thou conduct thyself ill be afraid of him;
For he cannot be expected to bear the sword in vain,
Since he is an avenging minister of God for the punishment of evil doers.
5. Ye must needs be obedient, however,
Not only through fear of punishment, but also through sense of duty.

In considering the language which the apostle (ver. 1, 2, 5) holds on this important subject, one is immediately struck, and to some extent embarrassed, by the absolute and unqualified universality of it. He is evidently speaking of the governing powers generally, whether personally regarded, as magistrates, or impersonally, as magistracies; and all these without limitation or exception are said to be "instituted by God," in such a sense that he who resists them "resists an institution of God:" it is therefore a matter of conscience with every Christian in all cases to be "obedient" to them. One almost stands aghast at such a statement; and asks with some earnestness whether the apostle really meant to enforce, or really held for himself, such a sweeping political philosophy as this. There is at least one exception which it would have been natural for him to think of, and which might have been brought to his recollection, if not by his own consciousness, by the language of two of his fellow-apostles—"We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts v. 29). See also Matt. xxii. 21: "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

It seems reasonable to suppose that, in his express and strong assertion that all civil governments are "instituted by God," the apostle had an eye especially to Jewish converts, who would not forget that the government of their own country was pre-eminently of divine origination, and who might on this ground regard with less respect those of other

countries. In the two cases, indeed, there was a palpable difference; but the writer's idea is that, since all governments exist under the permission of God's providence, every existing government must be held to have so much of his sanction as entitles it to respect from those who fear him; and this quite independently of the character of the government itself, or of its administrators whether good or evil. In this respect pagan governments were to be regarded as on a level even with the Jewish theocracy.

In its wider application the meaning of the precept appears to be this:—"Accept all *political* arrangements as providential, and be cordially subject to them while they last. Your conversion to Christianity gives you no new *political* position, and confers on you no new *political* rights. Do not, *as Christians*, become malcontents or revolutionists." See 1 Peter ii. 13–17.

As this seems to be all that the apostle could intend to say, so the saying of it entails no embarrassment. The doctrine leaves open, on the one hand, the path of Christian duty in obeying God rather than man, since religion is not properly a matter of *political* arrangement; and, on the other, it leaves unimpaired all the civil rights which are possessed by mankind *as men*, whether Christians or not. For, if conversion to Christianity confers on us no new political position or rights, neither, it may fairly be inferred, does it take away any that we have.

In thus explaining the passage in hand, I have endeavoured to forget how very different a meaning has by some commentators been attached to it, and of what an elaborate theory of political duty—the well-known theory of passive obedience and non-resistance—it has been made the foundation. With simplicity and conscientiousness, I trust, I have asked what the inspired writer really means; and to the best of my ability I have answered the question. If I might be permitted to notice for a moment the position of those who found on this passage the political theory of the divine right of kings, and the duty of non-resistance to rulers, I should observe that, in my judgment, their error lies in considering the apostle as laying down the duty of mankind at large rather than of Christians in particular, and that of Christians as men rather than exclusively as Christians. The political theorists in question, of course, mean to affirm not only the

divine right of all rulers, but the duty of non-resistance on the part of *all subjects*, and if the passage before us does not go to this point it is of no use to them: the passage before us, however, clearly does *not* go to this point, since it prescribes the duty only of Christians—and of Christians only as Christians—and exhibits an aspect of human governments which to none but Christians could be either influential or intelligible. Whether resistance to government—say, if you please, revolution and rebellion—may be ever justifiable, is a question for mankind as men, on which this passage says nothing; and if Christians, as men, are led to take part in such proceedings, the effect of their Christianity should be, not to forbid their action, but to regulate it.

In the last sentence of this paragraph (ver. 5 being in immediate connexion with ver. 2) the apostle recapitulates the two arguments on which he has been laying stress, but in an inverse order. "Ye must needs be obedient," he says, "not only through fear of punishment, but also through sense of duty:" in the order in which he urges them, however, conscience stands first and fear of punishment afterwards.

To the argument from duty towards God the apostle adds one derived from their temporal interest; namely, that any political interference which could be ascribed to them as Christians would be sure to bring down upon them the vengeance of the government—the word "damnation" is here infelicitously used by our translators—to which they were already sufficiently exposed without incurring this further danger: ver. 2.

In ver. 3, 4 the apostle seems to be replying to a thought which might have arisen in the minds of his readers:—"Yes; but the magistrates now inflict punishment upon us wrongfully, and without cause." To which he answers in substance, that this deviation from the true end of government is not sufficient to justify the giving of a revolutionary character to Christianity. When the apostle says that "rulers are not a terror to well-conducted persons," he clearly cannot be understood as speaking of a universal fact, since, even under the Roman government at that time (Nero was then emperor), the case was notoriously the opposite; he must be taken, therefore, to state what *ought* to be the course of all government, and to enforce the claim to respect for government

arising out of this design, notwithstanding too frequent and even fatal deviations from it.

In ver. 6, 7 the apostle treats another branch of the same subject, namely, the payment of taxes.

XIII. 6. For the same reason, also, pay ye the public imposts;
For [both rulers and collectors] are God's ministers attending to this matter.

The phrase "for the same reason" means, of course, for duty towards God; but some difficulty attaches to the second clause of the verse. "*They*," says the apostle, briefly, "are God's ministers." Who? To this obvious and necessary question there is no obvious or apparent answer, and it remains to select one of two parties suggested by the context. Either we understand the magistrates—and then the argument is that, since magistrates are God's ministers attending to the affairs of government, and since government cannot be carried on without money, imposts should be willingly paid: or we understand tax-collectors—and then the argument is that, since government is God's ordinance, and money is necessary to government, the gatherers of money are to be regarded as God's ministers as well as magistrates. The general meaning is the same in either case, and it is not, perhaps, of much importance which interpretation is chosen. The force of the precept is that public imposts should be readily and honestly paid—neither resisted, nor evaded. For Jewish converts, possibly, it might have a special importance.

In ver. 7 the apostle seems to expand his thought, and to comprehend more than pecuniary payments.

XIII. 7. Render to all their dues:
Tribute to whom tribute is due;
Custom to whom custom;
Fear to whom fear;
Honour to whom honour.

In this verse, if the two former particulars may be regarded as indicating diverse modes of taxation, the two latter require to be understood of tokens of official respect—"fear" being the higher, and "honour" the lower degree. This last injunction is, of course, enforced by the same great reason as the former.

The apostle's view of the Christian's political duty is, as a whole, divided into three parts: first, obedience to rule;

secondly, payment of taxes; and thirdly, respect to official persons. The entire passage may be presented thus:—

XIII. 1. Let every person be obedient to the governing authorities.
For there is no government but of God;
All existing governments are instituted by God.
2. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth government, resisteth an institution of God.
And those who resist will expose themselves to just punishment.
3. Now rulers are not intended as a terror to well-conducted persons,
But to ill-conducted persons.
Wilt thou, therefore, not be afraid of the ruler?
Conduct thyself well, and thou mayest expect praise from him;
4. For he is a minister of God to thee for good:
But, if thou conduct thyself ill, be afraid of him;
For he cannot be expected to bear the sword in vain,
Since he is an avenging minister of God for the punishment of evildoers.
5. Ye must needs be obedient, however,
Not only through fear of punishment, but also through sense of duty.
6. For the same reason, also, pay the public imposts.
For [both rulers and collectors] are God's ministers attending to this matter.
7. Render to all their dues:
Tribute to whom tribute is due;
Custom to whom custom;
Fear to whom fear;
Honour to whom honour.

The Christian's Social Duty: chap. xiii. 8–10.

We have here before us a compact introverted parallelism, in the following form:—

XIII. 8. You owe no man anything but to love one another:
For he that loveth another hath fulfilled [the second table of] the law.
9. For this—
Thou shalt not commit adultery,
Thou shalt not kill,
Thou shalt not steal,
Thou shalt not covet—
And if there be any other [similar] commandment,
In one precept all are comprehended,
In this,
Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
10. He who loveth his neighbour doeth him no harm;
Therefore love is the fulfilment of the law.

The structure of this passage is singular. Our translators have taken the first clause of it in a preceptive sense—"Owe no man anything;" but, however important such a precept may be considered in itself, I do not think this interpretation agrees with the mind of the apostle. His course of thought I rather take to be something like this. Being about to lay down the Christian's social duty, before entering on the details it occurs to him that there exists a simple but comprehensive rule under which the whole of social duty is embraced, and by the enforcement of which the necessity of going into detail might be obviated: he says, therefore, "You owe no man anything but to love one another, which is a duty so obvious and so recognized that I need not enforce it at large."

In order to establish the position he has laid down the apostle adduces two arguments.

In the first place he refers to the precepts of the second table of the law, and shows (what, indeed, is sufficiently evident) that these, and all others of a similar kind, are comprehended in the one precept "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." At the close of ver. 9 I have rendered ἐν τουτῳ λόγῳ "in *one* precept," on account of the repetition otherwise occasioned by the subsequent introduction of the article, ἐν τῷ "in this."

The second reason which the apostle adduces in support of his position that love is the fulfilment of the second table of the law, is that "he who loveth his neighbour doeth him no harm." This argument, however, is scarcely so satisfactory as the former.

The law in question cannot strictly be said to be fulfilled by doing no harm to one's neighbour; it rather requires the doing of *all good*. It would seem necessary that the negative language of the apostle should be understood in a positive sense, the withholding of good being virtually the doing of evil.

The mode of exhibiting the Christian's duty which the apostle has here adopted is singular and peculiar, no express precept, as in all other cases, being given. He supersedes his intended specific injunctions by a general law, which appeals too powerfully to the conscience to need any enforcement. In this method the Christian's social duty is neither less definitely nor less powerfully enforced; since the general

precept, in its wonderful breadth of negative and positive application, serves as a most perfect and facile directory.

The use of this law as a rule implies that there is a kind of love of ourselves which is right; that, namely, which leads to a practical care of all our interests according to the value of each. This is right because God has committed these interests to our charge, and holds us responsible for them. We are, then, to love our neighbour in the same manner—that is, to take a practical care of his interests so far as opportunity and ability extend; and for the same reason, that God has to this extent committed these also to our charge.

The Christian's Duty before the World: chap. xiii. 11–14.

XIII. 11. And this more especially considering the advanced period [of our Christian profession,
Which warns us] that it is now high time to arouse ourselves from slumber,
Since our knowledge of the Gospel is more perfect than when we entered on it.
12. The night has passed away and the day has come;
Let us therefore cast off entirely raiment fitted only to darkness,
And clothe ourselves in a manner adapted to the light.
13. As in the day-time, let us behave ourselves decorously,
Not in rioting and drunkenness,
Not in chambering and wantonness,
Not in strife and envying;
14. But imitate ye the Lord Jesus Christ,
And do not let the business of your life be sensual enjoyment.

It is difficult to determine the true scope of this passage. From the commencement of it one would suppose, with some commentators, that the apostle was deriving an argument in support of the antecedent precepts from some peculiarity of the season then extant: *καὶ τοῦτο εἰδοτες τὸν καιρόν*—literally rendered by our translators, "And that, knowing the time," ver. 11. It seems, however, that this is rather an introduction to the precepts which follow, ver. 13, 14. Now, when we come to look at these precepts, we do not find them to have a peculiar fitness to any season; but to exhibit the general duty of a holy life, equally obligatory on Christians at all seasons. The only specialty in their terms is this, that

they exhibit the outward and visible aspect of human conduct, and prescribe what a Christian should be in the sight of the world, in the presence of which he walks as a professor of the name of Jesus, a declared follower of a holy Master. Taking this, as seems most natural, to be the idea of the passage as far as it is preceptive, it becomes necessary to interpret the former part in harmony with it. This duty of a holy outward life, always obligatory, was at that moment, the apostle says, especially obligatory: and, if we ask for what reason, the answer is, Νῦν γὰρ ἐγγύτερον ἡμῶν ἡ σωτηρία ἢ ὅτε ἐπιστεύσαμεν: literally, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." In what sense the word "salvation" is here used is a question in answering which commentators widely differ; but all their interpretations may be set aside on this ground, that no lapse of time can afford a special argument in support of the obligation of a holy life. It seems to me that the apostle's language must be understood, not of a lapse of time, but of something else —of something, namely, by which a more earnest attention to holy living may be enforced. Under this pressure of the context, I fall in with the suggestion of Schleusner, that instead of "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed," we should translate thus—"Now we have a more perfect knowledge of the Gospel than when we entered on our profession." This, as a fact, would be naturally, not to say obviously, true; while it was no less naturally adapted to quicken the carefulness of Christian professors as to manifest holiness of life. We shall now have to read somewhat differently the following clause, ver. 12. Instead of "the night is far spent, the day is at hand," we shall read—"the night *has passed* away, the day *has arrived*"—making the sense of the latter phrase present instead of future.

The changes I have thus proposed may be felt to be unexpected, and, perhaps, violent; but I believe they are not without sufficient critical authority, and the simplicity and harmony resulting from the adoption of them strongly recommend them.

Having introduced metaphorically the idea of past night succeeded by day, the apostle moulds upon it the precept which was in his mind.

XIII. 12. The night has passed away and the day has come:
Let us therefore cast off entirely raiment fitted only to darkness,
And clothe ourselves in a manner adapted to the light.

As the idea running through the whole passage seems to be that of assuming congruous apparel, I have rendered as above the two phrases τὰ ἔργα τοῦ σκότους, "the works of darkness," and τὰ ὅπλα τοῦ φωτός, "the armour of light:" a rendering both admissible and required.

I think, however, that the best way of treating this passage as a whole, is to take the preceptive part of it (ver. 13, 14) first (though it is here put last), and then to consider the motives by which it is enforced.

XIII. 13. As in the day-time, let us behave ourselves decorously,
Not in rioting and drunkenness,
Not in chambering and wantonness,
Not in strife and envying;
14. But imitate ye the Lord Jesus Christ.
And do not let the business of your life be sensual enjoyment.

In the beginning of this passage the word εὐσχημόνως evidently requires to be read "decorously," according, indeed, to the old English meaning of the word "honestly," which is used by our translators. By the phrase ὡς ἐν ἡμέρα, "as in the day-time," a metaphor is brought in from the preceding verse. The general idea is that, by universal consent, the day requires a decorous behaviour, all being exposed to the view of others; while vice and profligacy naturally choose the night, with its veil of darkness, for their unrestrained indulgence. So we, being spiritually "not of the night, nor of darkness," should "walk as children of light," not in ways of moral pollution.

It may seem strange, perhaps, that the apostle should find occasion to warn the Christian professors of that age against the particular vices here named; but it should be recollected from what a deeply profligate state of society some, at least, perhaps many, of the trophies of divine grace were called, and with how much difficulty profligate habits, when inveterate, are thrown off. Similar passages to this are to be found in 1 Thess. v. 4–8; Ephes. v. 8.

In the continuation of the precept in ver. 14, literally "Clothe yourselves, ἐνδύσασθε, with the Lord Jesus Christ" —there is a metaphor taken from the putting on of a gar-

ment. The meaning is "Imitate him; let your conduct be like his:" "holy, harmless, and undefiled." How beautiful a precept, and how powerfully enforced!

In the concluding portion of the precept it is not necessary to take the word ἐπιθυμίας, "lusts," in its worst sense; it may be understood of sensual pleasures generally, in themselves not sinful, but liable to excess or excessive regard: and the meaning may be, "Do not make sensual enjoyments the object and business of your life."

All this body of preceptive wisdom is, of course, enforced by the general evangelical motives—"by the mercies of God," and by the honour of our profession; but the apostle here derives an additional enforcement of them from the advanced period of Christian profession at which the Roman converts had arrived, ver. 11. This language seems to imply two things: first, that the commencement of Christian profession was sometimes—often?—marked by considerable practical imperfections; and secondly, that a period of slow progress (of "slumber") was too apt to follow upon it. They had, however, been professors so many years, and had advanced so far in the knowledge of the Gospel, that now it was "high time to arouse themselves from slumber;" and thus the whole of ver. 11 and 12 come in as a subordinate but powerful support of the general precept.

I may be permitted, perhaps, to exhibit the passage in the following form:—

XIII. 13. Let us behave ourselves decorously, like persons in the day-time;
Not in rioting and drunkenness,
Not in chambering and wantonness,
Not in strife and envying:
14. But imitate ye the Lord Jesus Christ.
And do not let the business of your life be sensual enjoyment.

11. And this more especially considering the advanced period [of our Christian profession,
Which warns us] that it is now high time to arouse ourselves from slumber;
Since our knowledge of the Gospel is more perfect than when we entered on it.
12. The night has passed away and the day has come;
Let us therefore cast off entirely raiment fitted only to darkness,
And clothe ourselves in a manner adapted to the light.

The artistic artifice of putting the motive first, and *after* it the precept which it is intended to enforce, is rare, but not without example. It doubtless has its adaptation to effect. See another instance of it in chap. xii. 20, 21.

The Christian's Duty towards Weak Brethren: chap. xiv. *passim*—xv. 1–7.

This extended passage is devoted to the treatment of a particular case, such as is at all times liable to arise, and was at that period probably not unfrequent, or without practical difficulty—the case of those who, according to the apostle's phrase, were "weak in the faith."

The persons thus indicated were not "weak *in faith*," that is to say, in believing on Christ for salvation; but "weak in *the faith*," or imperfectly acquainted with the whole of Gospel truth. It is easy to see how such cases could arise. The ritual system had deeply imbued the minds of the Jewish people with a group of ceremonial ideas—such as the distinction of meats and the sacredness of days—from which Christianity was entirely remote, and to which Christianity was entirely opposed; ideas which would have no existence in the mind of a Gentile disciple, but which would with difficulty be eradicated from the mind of a Jewish one. See also 1 Cor. viii. What was to be done in such a case? with a Jewish convert, for example, who, believing in Jesus, yet thought it necessary to observe the ritual law? Should he be received, or not? And if received, how treated?

To this implied question the apostle answers explicitly, "receive him." But in what sense is the word "receive" to be understood? It means either to treat kindly, or to admit into fellowship; and I give my preference to the latter.

"The weak in the faith," then, or those who did not enter into the full breadth of Christian liberty, were to be received as church members; but what is the meaning of the qualification attached to this injunction? "Not to διακρίσεις διαλογισμῶν." This phrase is not of easy interpretation. Literally it is—"not to distinctions of opinions." We may, perhaps, say—"discussions of opinions," meaning eager discussions, apt to interrupt the exercise of Christian love; and this of mere opinions, not doctrines essential to salvation.

The subject of the passage thus introduced, we may pay

some attention to its structure. Not at present taking into view the whole, here is a first portion of it which may be thus arranged:—

XIV. 1. Him that is weak in the faith receive ye [into fellowship],
But do not eagerly discuss non-essential points.
2. One believeth that he may eat all things,
Another, who is weak, eateth only herbs.
3. Let not him who eateth despise him who eateth not;
And let not him who eateth not condemn him who eateth;
For God hath accepted him.
[For he is another man's servant.]
4. Who art thou who condemnest another man's servant?
By [the judgment of] his own master he standeth or falleth.
Yea, [the strong brother] shall be sustained,
For the Lord will sustain him.
5. One esteemeth one day above another,
Another esteemeth all days alike.
Let every person make up his own mind.

This passage is evidently an introverted parallelism; the last line connecting itself closely with ver. 1: thus—

XIV. 1. Him that is weak in the faith receive ye [into fellowship],
But do not eagerly discuss non-essential points.
5. Let every person make up his own mind.

Then the second and penultimate clauses must be yoked together: thus—

XIV. 2. One believeth that he may eat all things,
Another, who is weak, eateth only herbs.
5. One esteemeth one day above another;
Another esteemeth all days alike.

These are the two forms of opinion which the apostle is treating throughout.

We have now the two central clauses, ver. 3, 4. Ver. 3 is a parallelism of four lines, of which the last member is wanting, the idea of it being carried on to ver. 4, to become the commencement of the next sentence, in the first line of which it is fully expressed. It is the idea of a fellow-disciple being "another man's servant;" and the addition of it to ver. 3 completes the parallelism.

XIV. 3. Let not him who eateth despise him who eateth not;
And let not him who eateth not condemn him who eateth;
For God hath accepted him:
[For he is another man's servant.]

The sense may be more plain, perhaps, if this be thrown into the form of an alternate parallelism.

XIV. 3. Let not him who eateth despise him who eateth not,
For God hath accepted him:
And let not him who eateth not condemn him who eateth,
[For he is another man's servant].

That the idea in the last line does require to be supplied here is manifest from this, that while the timid and self-denying disciple may be fully assured of God's acceptance, and is thus effectually shielded from contempt, the bold and adventurous disciple may not, perhaps, be quite so sure of it; so that, if he is to be withdrawn from condemnation, it must be for a different reason—namely, that, as another man's servant, he is not within the scope of judgment.

The second of these passages (ver. 4) is an enlarged treatment of the second of these cases, opening and applying the idea of "another man's servant."

XIV. 4. Who art thou that condemnest another man's servant?
By [the judgment of] his own master he standeth or falleth:
Yea, [the strong brother] shall be sustained,
For the Lord will sustain him.

The apostle here deals argumentatively with the two evils which were to be apprehended, the strong despising the weak, and the weak condemning the strong. And he deals with them separately. He rebukes both: the strong for despising the weak, on the ground that God had accepted him, which the acknowledgment of him as a fellow-disciple fully implied; and the weak for condemning the strong, on the ground that he was another man's servant, and, as such, not subject to the judgment of a brother. As this was wrong in principle, so it was false in the particular case; since, by God's approbation, the strong brother would be effectually sustained. The verb δυνατεῖ, which critically admits of the sense of "will," requires to be so taken here.

The next portion of the passage (ver. 6–13) is constructed in a manner altogether different from the preceding. It consists of two arguments, with the questions to which they relate placed in the middle between them, as exhibited in the following arrangement.

XIV. 6. He who regardeth the day, according to [his view of] the will of the Lord he regardeth it,
And he who regardeth not the day, according to [his view of] the will of the Lord he regardeth it not.
He who eateth meat, according to [his view of] the will of the Lord he eateth,
For he giveth God thanks;
And he who eateth not meat, according to [his view of] the will of the Lord he eateth not,
And he also giveth God thanks.
7. For none of us liveth according to his own will,
And none of us dieth according to his own will;
8. But whether we live, we live according to the will of the Lord,
Or whether we die, we die according to the will of the Lord:
Whether, therefore, we live or die, we are subject to the will of the Lord.
9. To this end, indeed, Christ both died and rose again,
That he might have dominion over both the dead and the living.
10. Why dost thou, on the one hand, condemn thy brother?
Or why dost thou, on the other hand, despise thy brother?
For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God:
11. For it is written—
As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,
And every tongue shall confess to God.
12. So then, every one of us shall give an account of himself to God:
13. No longer, therefore, let us condemn one another.

The apostle, having placed his main subject in the middle (ver. 10), so that it may divide his two arguments from one another and apply to them both, opens each at length. The first is, that the weak disciple acts on the same principle as the strong, a principle which is necessarily common to all Christians, and is, indeed, the very end of Christianity—the principle of submission to the will of Christ: how, therefore, can even the strongest despise him? Ver. 6–9. The second, that the strong has to meet a sufficiently solemn judgment (ver. 10), a judgment to which even the weakest ought to be content to refer him. A parallelistic artifice may be observed here by which the two questions are treated in their inverse order—the second first, and the first last; the whole thus assuming the form of an alternate parallelism.

Having thus concluded, in two parts, his argument against the strong despising the weak and the weak condemning the strong, the apostle proceeds to lay down the position, that in

such cases the strong should accommodate themselves to the weak. He passes to this idea by making use of the last line of the preceding paragraph, as though it were repeated in order to form the first line of this, in the following manner:—

XIV. 13. No longer, therefore, let us condemn one another;
But act on this principle, not to present a stumbling-block to a brother,
Or an occasion of sin.

In this passage the apostle indulges in a paronomasia, or a play upon words, which may be noticed in passing. In both lines he uses the word *κρίνω*, but in each line in a different sense. The literal rendering would be as follows:—

XIV. 13. No longer, therefore, let us *judge* one another;
But *judge* ye this rather—

In the first line the sense is to condemn, the idea being brought forward from the preceding passage; in the second line the sense is to form an opinion, or come to a conclusion. In my own rendering I have given the meaning in direct terms.

The apostle enforces his recommendation by showing how certainly the eating of questionable food by the strong would be an occasion of sin to the weak.

XIV. 14. I am certain, by the will of the Lord Jesus, that no food is unclean in itself;
To him who regards food as unclean, however, it is unclean.
15. Now, if thy brother be injured by thy food,
Thou art not acting kindly [to eat it].
Do not by thy food injure one for whom Christ died.

The argument of this passage is plain and decisive. In our version, in ver. 15 the word "destroy" is infelicitous; it is too strong. The meaning is "Do not injure;" the particular injury in view being a temptation to a weak brother to do what his conscience disapproves, and what, consequently, he cannot do without sin.

Ver. 16 presupposes a response from the strong brother to this effect: "But I have *a right* as a Christian to eat any food I like." To which Paul replies—"It is true, you have; but you are not bound to carry your right to its extreme. You may do a right thing in a censurable manner; and this is not worth while. Let not your conduct, unblameable in itself, expose you to blame by the manner of it." And he

supports this view by suggesting that the point on which a little self-denial was recommended was not one of the essentials of Christianity. "The kingdom of God" (a phrase for practical Christianity) is not eating and drinking food of any kind, but holy character—righteousness, and peace, and spiritual joy. As for other matters, they were altogether immaterial; the great object being to serve Christ in them, or to do what each regarded as his will: in which case Christ would accept a disciple, and his brethren should bear with him. The passage may be read as follows:—

XIV. 16. Let not thy right [to eat] be so asserted as to expose thee to censure.
17. Practical Christianity consisteth not in eating or drinking [food of any kind];
But in uprightness, kindness, and holy joy.
18. For the rest, he who regardeth the will of Christ is accepted by God,
And worthy of approbation by men.

In the following verses the apostle enforces his argument by going over the ground a second time, with characteristic variations.

XIV. 19. Let us thus pursue the course most conducive to peace,
And to the edification of one another.
20. Do not, for a sensual indulgence, obstruct the progress of the Gospel.

Again we have to suppose the response of a reluctant brother: "But all meats are really clean." True, says the apostle:—

XIV. 20. All kinds of food, indeed, are clean;
But he committeth sin who, by eating them, causeth mischief.
21. It is commendable neither to eat meat, nor to drink wine,
Nor to do anything by which thy brother stumbleth, or is ensnared, or is enfeebled.

We must here suppose another response: "But I am fully persuaded of my liberty." The apostle rejoins:—

XIV. 22. Hast thou full persuasion [of thy liberty]?
Use it for thyself in the sight of God.
Happy is he who exposeth not himself to censure in exercising his liberty.
23. He who doubteth, however, is guilty if he eat,
Because he eateth without full persuasion:
For whatever is done without full persuasion of its rectitude is sinful.

Having thus amplified and enforced his recommendation in ver. 13 not to put a stumbling-block in a weak brother's way, the apostle proceeds (chap. xv. 1–7) to a kindred topic, which may be said, indeed, to form the second part of the same argument.

XV. 1. Further, we who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak,
And not to pursue a course of self-pleasing.
2. Every one should rather please his neighbour [than himself],
For his good, to his edification.
3. Thus even Christ pleased not himself;
But [in his life it was] as it is written:
The reproaches of those who reproached thee have fallen upon me.

This quotation (from Psalm lxix. 9) is followed by a remark so singularly remote from the apostle's immediate subject, that one cannot but suspect in it a more distant reference.

XV. 4. Now the ancient Scriptures were written for our instruction,
That we, by patience and comfort derived from the Scriptures, might cherish this hope.

That this sentiment is not in its proper place becomes more manifest when we find the apostle directly afterwards returning to the matter in hand; carrying on with him, however, the phraseology of ver. 4 in his appellation of the Deity.

XV. 5. Now the God of patience and comfort grant you to feel towards each other as Jesus Christ felt.

If we conclude, then, that ver. 4 is not in its proper place here, the question arises whether a more appropriate one can be found for it. Now, if the reader will glance at a passage almost immediately following—ch. xv. 8–13—I think he will find one. Here the apostle is making large use of "the ancient Scriptures," in a way of "patience and comfort" on a question then attended with much irritation; and I have no doubt that, artistically (as in several former instances), the two passages are linked together by placing ver. 5, the commencement of the latter, before the conclusion of the former. On this assumption I shall omit it here, and incorporate it hereafter.

The apostle winds up his argument in the following manner.

XV. 5. Now the God of patience and comfort grant you to feel towards each other as Jesus Christ felt;
6. That unanimously, without disputes, ye may worship God,
Even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
7. Wherefore receive ye one another [to fellowship],
As Christ also hath received us [all],
To the glory of God.

He here encourages the church to an imitation of the example of Christ, in order that their worship may be free at once from bitter feeling and eager discussion, and may be characterized by unity both of sentiment and expression. And, finally, he reminds them that the principle on which he had been enjoining them to receive each other to fellowship was that on which the Lord Jesus Christ had received them all, and that their acting upon it was the only way by which their church-fellowship could be "to the glory of God."

We are now in a position to survey the whole of this extended argument.

The general theme is—"Admit to church-fellowship persons of contracted views as to Gospel liberty; but do not indulge in eager discussions of non-essential points. On these let every one freely enjoy his own opinion." Ch. xiv. 1 and 5.

The argument is divisible into two parts: the first (extending from ch. xiv. 2 to 13) treats of the two mischiefs likely to arise—the strong despising the weak and the weak condemning the strong; the second (extending from ch. xiv. 14 to ch. xv. 7) enforcing on the strong the duty of accommodating themselves to the weak.

Each of these parts is again divided. Of the first part, the first section (ch. xiv. 2–5) argues with each class separately; the second section (ver. 6–13) reasons with both on a common ground. Of this section the theme is placed in the middle—at ver. 10.

Of the second part, the first section (ch. xiv. 14–23) pleads for not putting a stumbling-block in the way of a weak brother—going over the ground twice—ver. 14–18, and ver. 19–23: the second section (ch. xv. 1–7) commends the exercise of self-denial for a brother's good.

The whole has great completeness; and the argument is applicable to all disputes about non-essentials in every age. The reader, perhaps, will be better satisfied if it is presented to him in an arranged form.

The Christian's Duty towards Weak Brethren.

Part I. Section I.

XIV. 1. Him who is weak in the faith receive ye [into fellowship],
But do not eagerly discuss non-essential points.
2. One believeth that he may eat all things,
Another, who is weak, eateth only herbs.
3. Let not him who eateth despise him who eateth not;
And let not him who eateth not condemn him who eateth;
For God hath accepted him:
[For he is another man's servant.]
4. Who art thou who condemnest another man's servant?
By [the judgment of] his own master he standeth or falleth.
Yea, [the strong brother] shall be sustained,
For the Lord will sustain him.
5. One esteemeth one day above another,
Another esteemeth all days alike.
Let every person make up his own mind.

Section II.

6. He who regardeth the day, according to [his view of] the will of the Lord he regardeth it,
And he who regardeth not the day, according to [his view of] the will of the Lord he regardeth it not.
He who eateth meat, according to [his view of] the will of the Lord he eateth it,
For he giveth God thanks;
And he who eateth not, according to [his view of] the will of the Lord he eateth not,
And he also giveth God thanks.
7. For none of us liveth according to his own will,
And none of us dieth according to his own will:
8. But, whether we live, we live according to the will of the Lord,
Or, whether we die, we die according to the will of the Lord;
Whether, therefore, we live or die, we are subject to the will of the Lord.
9. To this end, indeed, Christ both died and rose again,
That he might have dominion over both the dead and the living.
10. Why dost thou, on the one hand, condemn thy brother?
Or why dost thou, on the other hand, despise thy brother?
For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God.

XIV. 11. For it is written:
As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,
And every tongue shall confess to God.
12. So, then, every one of us shall give an account of himself to God.
13. No longer, therefore, let us condemn one another.

Part II. Section I.

A.

[No longer, therefore, let us condemn one another.]
But act on this principle, not to present a stumbling-block to a brother,
Or an occasion of sin.
14. I am certain, by the will of the Lord Jesus, that no food is unclean in itself;
To him who regardeth food as unclean, however, it is unclean.
15. Now, if thy brother be injured by thy food,
Thou art acting not kindly [to eat it].
Do not by thy food injure one for whom Christ died.
16. Let not thy right [to eat] be so asserted as to expose thee to censure.
17. Practical Christianity consisteth not in eating or drinking [food of any kind];
But in uprightness, kindness, and holy joy.
18. For the rest, he who regardeth the will of Christ is accepted by God,
And worthy of approbation by men.

B.

19. Let us thus pursue the course most conducive to peace,
And to the edification of one another.
20. Do not, for the sake of food, obstruct the progress of the Gospel.
All kinds of food, indeed, are clean;
But sin is committed by him who, by eating, causeth mischief.
21. It is praiseworthy neither to eat meat, nor to drink wine,
Nor to do any thing by which thy brother stumbleth, or is ensnared, or enfeebled.
22. Hast thou full persuasion [of thy liberty]?
Use it for thyself in the sight of God.
Happy is he who exposeth not himself to censure in exercising his liberty.
23. He who doubteth, however, is guilty if he eat,
Because he eateth without full persuasion [of his liberty]:
For whatever is done without full persuasion of its rectitude is sinful.

Section II.

XV. 1. Further, we who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak,
And not to pursue a course of self-pleasing.
2. Every one should rather please his neighbour [than himself],
For his good, to his edification.
3. Thus even Christ pleased not himself;
But [in his life it was] as it is written:
The reproaches of those who reproached thee have fallen upon me.
5. Now the God of patience and comfort grant you to feel towards each other as Jesus Christ felt,
6. That unanimously, without disputes, ye may worship God,
Even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
7. Wherefore receive ye one another [to fellowship],
As Christ also hath received us [all],
To the glory of God.

EPISTOLARY PORTION, Part II.: chap. xv. 4 and 8 to xvi. *fin.*

XV. 4. Now the ancient Scriptures were written for our instruction,
That we, through patience and comfort derived from the Scriptures, might cherish this hope.
8. I affirm that Jesus Christ had a mission to the circumcised in relation to the truth of God,
In order to fulfil the promises made to the fathers;
[And that he had also a mission to the Gentiles,
In order to fulfil the promises made respecting them.]
9. That the Gentiles also may glorify God for his mercy,
As it is written:
For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles,
And I will sing unto thy name.
10. And again [the Scripture saith],
Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.
11. And again [the Scripture saith],
Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles,
And praise him, all ye people.
12. And again Isaiah saith,
There shall be a root of Jesse,
And he shall rise to reign over the Gentiles,
In him shall the Gentiles trust.
13. May God, who has given you this hope, fill you with great joy and peace in assurance of it,
That ye may fully realize it by the help of the Holy Spirit.
14. Now I am persuaded, my brethren,
Even I myself respecting you,
That you are full of kindness,
Of enlarged knowledge,
And able to admonish one another.

XV. 15. The more freely, however, have I written to you, brethren,
Although in part reminding you of what you already know,
Because of the office conferred on me by God,
16. That I should be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles,
Making known to them the glad tidings from God,
In order that the offering of the Gentile converts may be acceptable,
It being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.
17. I have, therefore, a ground of confidence, through Christ Jesus, in speaking of divine things.
18. [And in saying this I am not arrogant],
Since I speak only of what Christ hath wrought through me for the conversion of the Gentiles,
By preaching and by labours,
19. By mighty signs and wonders,
By the Holy Spirit;
So that from Jerusalem and round about it as far as Illyricum,
I have effectually published the glad tidings concerning Christ.
20. In such manner, indeed, have I endeavoured to publish the glad tidings,
Not so much where Christ had been confessed,
Lest I should build on another man's foundation;
But [where Christ had not been confessed;
That it might be] as it is written—
21. They to whom he had not been spoken of shall see,
And those who had not heard shall understand.
22. Owing to this I have long been hindered from coming to you;
23. But, having now no further scope in these parts,
And having had a strong desire to visit you for several years,
24. Whenever I may take my journey into Spain I will come to you.
For I hope to see you in my journey,
And to be brought on my way thitherward by you,
After having for a time been gratified by your company.
25. More immediately, indeed, I am going to Jerusalem,
In order to minister to the saints:
26. For [the disciples of] Macedonia and Achaia have kindly made a contribution for the poor saints at Jerusalem.
27. They have done it kindly, indeed, but not without a just obligation:
For, if the Gentiles have partaken of their spiritual privileges,
They ought to minister to their carnal necessities.
28. When, however, I have performed this service,
And safely delivered to them this bounty,
I will travel by you into Spain.
29. And I am sure that, in visiting you,
I shall come with an abundant blessing from Christ.

XV. 30. Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake,
And as an expression of your love for me,
To wrestle with me in prayer to God on my account,
31. That I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judæa,
And that my service at Jerusalem may be accepted by the saints;
32. So that I may come to you with joy by the will of God,
And may be refreshed with you.
33. The God of peace be with you all. Amen.
XVI. 1. I commend to you Phœbe our sister,
A deaconess of the church in Cenchræa;
2. That ye may receive her in the Lord worthily of saints,
And may assist her in whatsoever business she may need it;
For she hath been a succourer of many,
And of myself also.
3. Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus,
4. Who for my life have laid down their own neck;
To whom not only I give thanks, but all the Gentile churches,
5. And the church which is in their house.
Greet Epenetus, my beloved,
Who is the firstfruits of Asia to Christ.
6. Greet Mary, who has laboured much for us.
7. Greet Andronicus and Junia,
My kinsmen and fellow-prisoners,
Who are highly esteemed among the apostles,
Who also were Christians before me.
8. Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord.
9. Greet Urbanus, our fellow-labourer in Christ,
And Stachys, my beloved.
10. Greet Apelles, an approved Christian.
Greet the converts in Aristobulus's household.
11. Greet Herodion, my kinsman.
Greet those in the family of Narcissus who are in the Lord.
12. Greet Tryphæna and Tryphosa, who have laboured in the Lord.
Greet the beloved Persis, who has laboured much in the Lord,
13. Greet Rufus, beloved of the Lord,
And his mother and mine.
14. Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas,
And the brethren who are with them.
15. Greet Philologus and Julia,
Nereus and his sister and Olympas,
And all the saints who are with them.
16. Greet one another with a pure salute.
All the churches of Christ salute you.
17. Now I beseech you, brethren, to mark those who occasion dissensions and scandals contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned,
And withdraw from them.

XVI. 18. For such persons do not serve Christ our Lord, but seek their own advantage,
And by fair speaking and flattery they mislead the guileless.
19. Your regular walk, however, has become known to all,
I rejoice, therefore, over you:
But I wish you to be discerning as to what is good,
And simple-minded as to what is evil.
20. Now the God of peace will bruise the adversary under your feet shortly.
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
21. There greet you Timothy, my fellow-labourer,
And Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen.
22. I greet you—I, Tertius, who have written this epistle—
In the Lord.
23. There greeteth you Gaius, the host of myself
And of the whole church.
There greeteth you Erastus, the steward of the city,
And Quartus, a brother.
24. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.
25. Now to him who [alone] is able to give you assurance respecting my glad tidings,
And the truths published respecting Jesus Christ,
By the disclosure of the mystery from former ages concealed,
26. But made fully manifest now, in accordance with the prophetical Scriptures;
[And,] according to the will of the everlasting God,
For obedience by faith;
Proclaimed to all the nations;
27. To the only wise God, through Jesus Christ,
To him be glory for ever. Amen.

Having concluded the substance of his Epistle, the apostle draws to a close by touching on sundry minor topics, such as the present circumstances of the converts at Rome suggested.

Of Jew and Gentile: chap. xv. 4 and 8–13.

According to the intimation I have recently given I commence this passage by ver. 4, and with a sentiment which the apostle seems to have artistically placed there by anticipation.

XV. 4. Now the ancient Scriptures were written for our instruction,
That, by patience and comfort derived from the Scriptures, we might cherish this hope.
8. For I affirm that Jesus Christ had a mission to the circumcised in relation to the truth of God,
In order to fulfil the promises made to the fathers;
[And that he had also a mission to the Gentiles,
In order to fulfil the promises made respecting them.]

XV. 9. That the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy;
As it is written,
For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles,
And I will sing unto thy name.
10. And again [the Scripture saith,]
Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.
11. And again [the Scripture saith,]
Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles,
And praise him, all ye people.
12. And again, Isaiah saith,
There shall be a root of Jesse,
And he shall rise to reign over the Gentiles,
In him shall the Gentiles trust.
13. May God who has given you this hope fill you with great joy and peace in the assurance of it,
That ye may fully realize it by the help of the Holy Spirit.

The first of the minor topics to which the apostle adverts is the mixture of Jews and Gentiles in the church, a circumstance which presented practically a twofold difficulty; it being hard, on the one hand, for Jewish disciples to concede full church-privileges to the Gentiles, and scarcely less hard, on the other, for Gentile converts to believe fully in the enjoyment of them. Definitively to settle this question, the apostle makes a direct and earnest reference to the ancient Scriptures, an authority which both parties are bound to acknowledge, and one which gave on this subject utterances neither few nor indistinct. It might seem, indeed, as though it had been the special design of a large part of them to foster this particular hope, and to keep it alive during the period of Jewish isolation, inspiring "patience" on the one hand and "comfort" on the other.

As an interpreter, the apostle lays down the principle that the mission of Christ was twofold. On the one hand, indeed, he had a peculiar mission to the circumcised, inasmuch as promises of peculiar import had been made to the patriarchs and their posterity, and for the honour of God's truth these promises must be fulfilled. Such, for example, was the leading promise to Abraham and his seed after him (Gen. xvii. 7), regarded as primarily secular, but secondarily spiritual. So Christ "came unto his own," and the apostles preached the Gospel "first" to the Jews. On the other hand, however, Christ had a mission also to the Gentiles, as, indeed, was intimated even in the patriarchal promise itself —"In thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." This is not expressed, but it is evidently implied, and I have accordingly inserted it.

The principle he has thus laid down the apostle confirms, for the sake both of Jewish and of Gentile converts, by citations from the Old Testament Scriptures (Psalm xviii. 49: Deut. xxxii. 43: Psalm cxvii. 1: and Isa. xi. 10), foretelling that the Gentiles were to "glorify God for his mercy," and he concludes by expressing his desire that God might fully establish them in this truth.

Personal Topics: ver. 14–33.

This passage, which commences by an easy transition from the topic immediately preceding, obviously divides itself into two parts. The former of these (ver. 14–19) relates to the principle which the apostle has just laid down respecting the equal *status* of Jew and Gentile in the church, and is a kind of apology, gracefully tendered, for the plainness with which he had spoken. It is as though he imagined some one saying—"Why, Paul, you give us credit for very little either of Christian knowledge or Christian feeling." "Pardon me," says he; "I do not mean this. On the contrary, I acknowledge," &c.: and then he states the claim which his office as the apostle of the Gentiles gave him to their attention.

XV. 14. Now I am persuaded, my brethren,
Even I myself respecting you,
That you are full of kindness,
Of enlarged knowledge,
And able to admonish one another.
15. The more freely, however, have I written to you, brethren,
Although in part reminding you of what you already know,
16. Because of the office conferred on me by God;
That I should be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles,
Making known to them the glad tidings from God,
In order that the offering of the Gentile converts may be acceptable,
It being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.
17. I have, therefore, a ground of confidence, through Christ Jesus, in speaking of divine things.
18. [And in saying this I am not arrogant;]
Since I speak only of what Christ hath wrought through me for the conversion of the Gentiles,
By preaching and by labours,
19. By mighty signs and wonders,
By the Holy Spirit;
So that from Jerusalem and round about it as far as Illyricum,
I have effectually published the glad tidings concerning Christ.

It is by a singular form of expression that this passage is introduced. I strictly follow the phraseology and arrangement of the original in the form in which I present it.

XV. 14. Now I am persuaded, my brethren,
Even I myself concerning you,
That you are full of kindness,
Of enlarged knowledge,
And able to admonish one another.

The singularity here lies in the emphasis which, by the terms in the second line, the apostle lays on his good opinion of the Roman converts. Whether I see the force of it fully, or even correctly, I am not sure; but it seems to me as though the phraseology were intended to give a tone of certainty to what might else be found hard of belief.

Ver. 16 contains a figurative expression of great beauty, derived from the Jewish ritual. Assuming the character of a priest, Paul speaks of himself as *ἱερουργοῦντα τὸ εὐαγγέλιον* —"as a priest making known the Gospel;" and as desiring to present his converts from among the Gentiles as "an offering"—*προσφορὰ*—acceptable to God.

Ver. 18 is held by the critics to be obscure through extreme brevity. Having just said that he had "a ground of confidence in speaking of divine things," he seems to have felt that he might be held liable to a charge of arrogance, which he here wards off by saying (literally), "I will not presume to speak of what Christ hath not wrought through me:" that is to say, I acknowledge Christ to be the author of all that I have done, and consequently I boast of nothing. A similar form of expression occurs in Gal. ii. 20: "Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

The "mighty signs and wonders" spoken of in ver. 19, although we have no historical detail of them, are sufficiently indicated by several passages in the Acts of the Apostles: see especially Acts xix. 11, 12.

In describing the extent of his evangelistic labours, the apostle takes Jerusalem as a central point, and speaks of his journeys "round about" it. We know that he had then been into Arabia, Syria, and Greece; and he mentions Illyricum as the extreme point of his travels at that time. By Illyricum (ver. 19) the apostle seems to have intended the province of Illyria, which, situated on the eastern shore of the Adriatic Gulf, constituted the western portion of Greece.

It was only recently that the apostle had extended his evangelistic labours to this region.

The second portion of this passage extends from ver. 20 to 33; and relates to the apostle's desire to visit Rome: thus connecting itself closely with chap. i. 10–13, where the same desire is expressed.

XV. 20. In such manner, indeed, have I endeavoured to publish the glad tidings,
Not so much where Christ had been confessed,
Lest I should build on another man's foundation,
But [where Christ had not been confessed,
That it might be] as it is written—
21. They to whom he had not been spoken of shall see,
And those who had not heard shall understand.
22. Owing to this I have long been hindered from coming to you;
23. But, having now no further scope in these parts,
And having had for several years a strong desire to visit you,
24. Whenever I may take my journey into Spain I will come to you.
For I hope to see you in my journey,
And to be brought on my way thitherward by you,
After having for a time been gratified by your company.
25. More immediately, indeed, I am going to Jerusalem,
In order to minister to the saints;
26. For [the disciples of] Macedonia and Achaia have kindly made a contribution for the poor saints at Jerusalem.
27. They have done it kindly, indeed, but not without a just obligation:
For if the Gentiles have partaken of their spiritual privileges,
They ought to minister to their carnal necessities.
28. When, however, I have performed this service,
And safely delivered this bounty,
I will travel by you into Spain;
29. And I am sure that, in visiting you,
I shall come with an abundant blessing from Christ.
30. Now I beseech you, brethren,
For our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,
And as an expression of your love for me,
To wrestle with me in prayer to God on my account,
31. That I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judæa,
And that my service at Jerusalem may be accepted by the saints;
32. So that I may come to you with joy by the will of God,
And may be refreshed with you.
33. The God of peace be with you all. Amen.

The apostle here assigns as the reason for his long delay in visiting the disciples at Rome, the earnestness with which he

had been led to push his preaching of the Gospel into new regions; which, he says, he had the rather done as he did not wish to build on foundations which another had laid—that is to say, he did not wish to take the credit of another man's work.

In ver. 23 the apostle speaks of having desired "for several years" to visit Rome. It was about four years since he had received his first information respecting the Christians at Rome from Aquila and Priscilla.

Ver. 24 and 28 mention a prospective journey into Spain. It cannot be positively decided whether Paul ever took this journey, but by the best critics it is thought most probable that he did.

Acts xi. 29 informs us of the occasion for the collection for the saints mentioned in ver. 25 *seq.* In ver. 26 and 27 the repetition of the phrase εὐδόκησαν—"They have done it kindly" is a mode of acknowledging the liberality of the gift, while suggesting, as in the following phrase, the moral obligation of the giver.

How much reason there was for the apprehension implied in ver. 30, 31 of ill-treatment at Jerusalem, is manifest from the account in Acts xxi. *seq.*, of what actually occurred there.

Salutations: chap. xvi. 1–24.

It has been questioned by some whether that which now follows constituted an integral part of the Epistle, but without sufficient reason. It is obviously of the nature of a postscript.

The first two verses relate to a person who, although probably not the actual bearer of the letter, was making the journey to Rome in company with the bearer.

XVI. 1. I commend to you Phœbe, our sister,
A deaconess of the church in Cenchræa,
2. That ye may receive her in the Lord worthily of saints,
And may assist her in whatsoever business she may need it:
For she hath been a succourer of many,
And of myself also.

From this single hint in the New Testament, connected with intimations in ecclesiastical history, it appears that in the first churches there was an order of female *employées*

called deaconesses; for whose services the state of society then existing in the East afforded great scope. Cenchræa was the port of Corinth. Nothing is known of the object of Phœbe's journey.

The apostle now comes to direct salutations, which here are remarkable as being much more numerous than in any other epistle in the New Testament. They are addressed to twenty-six single persons, and to two whole families. The apostle's familiarity with the principal converts at Rome is thus indicated, as well as the warmth of his Christian and social affections.

XVI. 3. Greet Priscilla and Aquila,
My fellow-workers in Christ Jesus,
4. Who for my life have laid down their own neck;
To whom not only I give thanks,
But all the Gentile churches,
5. And the church which is in their house.

The phrase "fellow-workers" seems to refer not to office, but simply to Christian co-operation. The last phrase—"the church which is in their house"—is worthy of note. That Christian assemblies should then be held in private houses was, probably, a matter of necessity. Whether here was a church organized may be doubtful; but, at any rate, the phrase shows that the disciples of Christ separated themselves from the synagogue.

XVI. 5. Greet Epenetus, my beloved,
Who is the firstfruits of Asia to Christ.
6. Greet Mary, who has laboured much for us.
7. Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and fellow-prisoners,
Who are highly esteemed among the apostles,
Who also were Christians before me.
8. Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord.
9. Greet Urbanus, our fellow-labourer in Christ,
And Stachys, my beloved.
10. Greet Apelles, an approved Christian.
Greet the converts in Aristobulus's household.
11. Greet Herodion, my kinsman.
Greet those in the family of Narcissus who are in the Lord.
12. Greet Tryphæna and Tryphosa, who have laboured in the Lord.
Greet the beloved Persis, who has laboured much in the Lord.
13. Greet Rufus, beloved of the Lord,
And his mother and mine.

XVI. 14. Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes,
And the brethren who are with them.
15. Greet Philologus and Julia,
Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas,
And all the saints who are with them.
16. Greet one another with a pure salute.

Respecting the persons here mentioned nothing is known. Of the names it may be stated that they are all found in the catalogue of ancient inscriptions. In ver. 5 I have inserted "Asia" instead of "Achaia" on critical authority.

To the "kiss of peace" (ver. 16) the apostle refers also in his Epistles to the Corinthians (I. and II.) and to the Thessalonians. The custom continued during a great part of the first century, but speedily came into disuse.

Before concluding his Epistle, the apostle makes a final and more explicit reference to the disputes and dissensions of which he had been informed, and to allay which had been in part the object of his writing. An introverted parallelism is found, beginning with the last clause of ver. 16 and extending to ver. 21.

XVI. 16. All the churches of Christ salute you.
17. Now I beseech you, brethren, to mark those who cause dissensions and scandals contrary to the doctrine ye have received,
And withdraw from them.
18. For such persons do not serve Christ our Lord, but seek their own advantage;
And by fair speaking and flattery they mislead the guileless.
19. Your regular walk, however, has become known to all,
And I rejoice, therefore, over you;
But I wish you to be discerning as to what is good,
And simple-minded as to what is evil.
20. Now the God of peace will bruise the adversary under your feet shortly.
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
21. There greet you Timothy, my fellow-labourer,
And Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen.

The sources of mischief which the apostle had in his eye were probably two: on the one hand, immoralities committed by those who had made a profession of Christianity; and on the other, heretical opinions introduced into the church. It is worthy of note that the only remedy was to "withdraw from them."

Having disposed of this business in a kind of parenthesis,

the apostle resumes his salutations, or rather the second portion of them.

XVI. 16. All the churches of Christ salute you.
21. There greet you Timothy, my fellow-labourer,
And Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen.
22. I greet you—
I, Tertius,
Who have written this epistle,
In the Lord.
23. There greeteth you Gaius, the host of myself
And of the whole church.
There greeteth you Erastus, the steward of the city,
And Quartus, a brother.
24. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Ver. 21. Timothy was then residing at Corinth. Lucius is probably the same person mentioned in Acts xiii. 1. Jason is mentioned in Acts xvii. 5–9. Sosipater is mentioned in Acts xx. 4.

Ver. 22 was written in his own name by the amanuensis, or person employed by Paul to write the Epistle. Singularly enough, it is a complete little introverted parallelism.

Ver. 23. Gaius; probably the person mentioned at 1 Cor. xiv. 14. As the "host of the whole church," he probably allowed the meetings of the church to be held at his house.

Erastus was the steward, or treasurer, of the city; an office of high dignity.

Ver. 24. These words were now probably added by Paul's own hand, as was his custom. Compare 1 Cor. xvi. 21; Gal. vi. 11; 2 Thess. iii. 17; Philem. 19.

The Doxology: chap. xvi. 25–27.

XVI. 25. Now to him who [alone] is able to give you assurance respecting my glad tidings,
And the truths published concerning Jesus Christ,
By the disclosure of the mystery from former ages concealed,
26. But made fully manifest now,
In accordance with the prophetical Scriptures,
[And,]
According to the will of the everlasting God,
For obedience by faith,
Proclaimed to all the nations;
27. To the only wise God,
Through Jesus Christ,
To him be glory
For ever. Amen.

The Epistle nobly closes with this fervid ascription of glory "to the only wise God." The pen of the accomplished composer is clearly traceable in it. Ver. 26, for example, is an elaborate introverted parallelism. The principal ideas are placed first and last; namely, that the long-concealed mystery is "made fully manifest now," and "proclaimed to all the nations." Subordinately to the first of these ideas, the apostle tells us that the disclosure of the mystery was "in accordance with the prophetical Scriptures;" and subordinately to the second of them, he tells us that the publication of the disclosed mystery to all the nations was "by the will of the everlasting God," and "for obedience by faith." The 27th verse also is evidently framed as an alternate parallelism.

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I.

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II.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

ARRANGED IN PARALLELISM.

[The Epistle is here presented to the reader not always in the order of writing, but in what is considered to be the order of the writer's thought. The distinctions of chapter and verse are therefore omitted.]

EPISTOLARY PORTION.—Part I.

The Salutation.

Paul,
A servant of Jesus Christ,
Appointed an apostle,
Set apart to publish glad tidings from God—

[Glad tidings from God],
Which he had fore-announced by his prophets,
In the Holy Scriptures,
Concerning his Son:

[Concerning his Son],
Of the seed of David as to his human nature,
Demonstrated effectually to be the Son of God as to his divine nature by his resurrection from the dead,
Jesus Christ our Lord:

From whom
We have received grace,
And apostleship,
For submission by faith,
Among all the nations,
For his glory:

[Among all the nations],
Among whom ye also are called by Jesus Christ:

To all who are in Rome,
[Called by Jesus Christ]
Beloved by God,
Made holy;
Grace be to you,
And peace,
From God our Father,
And our Lord Jesus Christ.

Personal Topics.

In the first place, I thank my God,
Through Jesus Christ,
Concerning you all,
That your piety is celebrated through the whole world.

Also my witness is God,
Whom I serve from my heart,
In publishing the glad tidings concerning his Son,
That I incessantly make mention of you;

Always in my prayers requesting,
If by any means at length I may be so happy,
By the will of God,
To visit you:

For I long to see you,
That I may impart to you some spiritual gift for your establishment.
I long to see you, also,
That I may be jointly comforted with you by our mutual piety.

And I am desirous you should know, brethren, that I have often proposed to visit you,
Although I have been hindered until now,
That I might enjoy some pleasure among you as among converts of other nations.

Both to Greeks and Barbarians,
Both to the learned and the unlearned,
I am under obligation—
And I have long and earnestly desired
To you also who are in Rome,
To publish the glad tidings.
For I am not ashamed of the glad tidings;
For it is divinely-efficacious to the salvation of every believer;
Of a Jew in the first instance, and also of a Gentile.

DIDACTIC PORTION.—Part I.

Section I.—Of Justification.

Justification announced.

For a divine method of justification
  By it is revealed,
Through faith,
  For faith.
As it is written—
The righteous shall live through his faith.

MAN'S NEED OF JUSTIFICATION.

The Moral Government of God.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against the universal impiety and injustice of men,
Who combine the knowledge of the true God with iniquity.

He will render to every one according to his works:
  To those, on the one hand, who by perseverance in well-doing seek for immortal glory and honour,
    Eternal happiness;
  To those, on the other, who are rebellious and resist the truth, living unrighteously,
    Indignation and wrath:

  Tribulation and anguish to every man whose works are evil,
    To a Jew first and also to a Gentile;
  But glory, honour, and joy to every one whose works are good,
    To a Jew first and also to a Gentile:
For there is no partiality with God.

  For those who have sinned without a revealed law will not suffer its penalties,
  And those who have sinned under revealed law will be judged according to it.
  For not hearers of the law are righteous before God,
  But doers of the law will be accounted righteous.
  For when nations who have not a revealed law instinctively do things prescribed by the law,
    They, not having a law, are a law to themselves,
    It being manifest that the law is practically written in their hearts.
  Their consciences also witnessing, and their reflections alternately condemning and excusing them.

In the day when God will judge the secret works of men,
By Jesus Christ,
According to the glad tidings which I publish.

THE MORAL CONDITION OF MANKIND.

The Gentiles.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against the universal
impiety and injustice of men,
Who combine the knowledge of the true God with iniquity.

Because what is knowable of God is manifested to them:
For God hath made it manifest to them—
For his invisible attributes,
Since the creation of the world,
Being discerned by the things which are created,
Have been clearly discoverable,
Even his eternal power and Godhead,
So that they are inexcusable;
Because, knowing God, not as God did they worship or thank him.

[Knowing God, not as God did they worship or thank him];
But they became absurd in their conceptions of him,
And their inconsiderate heart was darkened.
Those who boasted of their wisdom were infatuated,
And dishonoured the glorious incorruptible God by worshipping a
likeness and image of corruptible man,
And images of birds, and of quadrupeds, and of reptiles.
They superseded the true God by pretended ones;
And so worshipped and served the creature instead of the Creator,
Who is blessed for ever. Amen.

Wherefore God abandoned them,
Through their own lasciviousness,
To uncleanness,
Mutually to dishonour their own persons.
On this account God abandoned them to infamous passions.
For women changed the natural use into one unnatural;
And in like manner men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned
with desire one towards another:
Men with men perpetrating the shame,
And each receiving the due recompense of his fault.

And as they did not choose to retain God in their recollection,
God abandoned them to a perverse mind,
To do evil.
They abounded in all forms of wickedness—injury, covetousness,
maliciousness:
They were full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity,
They were whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, insolent, proud,
boasters, inventors of evil:
They were without obedience to parents, without consideration,
without fidelity, without natural affection, without compassion.
Having known the sentence of God that those who do such things
are worthy of punishment,
They not only do them, but are complacent in those who do them.

The Jews—their Guilt.

But thou also art inexcusable, O man, whoever accuseth,
For wherein thou accusest another thou condemnest thyself;
For thou who accusest another doest the same things.

For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you,
As it is written:
There is not a righteous person,
There is not even one.
There is not one who understandeth,
There is not one who seeketh after God.
All have gone out of the right way,
Together they have become perverse.
There is none who worketh righteousness,
There is not so much as one.
Their throat is an open sepulchre,
They have deceived with their tongues;
The poison of asps is within their lips;
Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.
Their feet are swift to shed blood,
Destruction and misery lurk in their ways,
Also the way of peace they have not known,
There is no fear of God before their eyes.
Now we know that what the Scripture thus saith it saith concerning those who are instructed by it.

Behold, thou art called a Jew, and reliest on revelation;
And gloriest in God, and knowest his will,
And discernest what is more excellent, being instructed by revelation;
And art confident that thou art a guide of the blind, a light of those who are in darkness, an instructor of the ignorant, a teacher of babes,
Since thou hast the certain knowledge of truth by revelation:
Thou, therefore, who art able to teach another, teachest thou not thyself?
Thou who enjoinest not to steal, dost thou steal?
Thou who enjoinest not to commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery?
Thou who abhorrest idols, dost thou profane the temple?
Thou who gloriest in the law, by breaking the law dost thou dishonour God?

Now we know that the sentence of God is certain against those who commit such things.
Thinkest thou this, then, O accuser of those who do such things yet doing the same,
That thou shalt escape the judgment of God?
Or dost thou despise his rich kindness, and patience, and long-suffering,

Not considering that the kindness of God leadeth thee to repentance;
And by thy obduracy and inconsiderate disposition,
Treasure up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath,
And revelation of the judicial righteousness of God?

The Jews—their position as a favoured People.

Thy state as circumcised is privileged if thou fulfil the law,
But since thou art a breaker of the law thou art as if uncircumcised.
When, therefore, an uncircumcised person keepeth the precepts of the law,
Shall not he be regarded as if he were circumcised?
For he by birth circumcised yet keeping the law, condemneth
Thee, although scripturally instructed and circumcised, as a breaker of the law.
For not he who is so externally only is a Jew,
Nor is that which is outward and corporeal only circumcision;
But he who is so internally is a Jew,
And circumcision is a change of the heart.

These have a spiritual as well as a literal meaning,
And the privilege is not human, but divine.

What, then, is the pre-eminence of a Jew?
Or what the advantage of his circumcision?

Much, in many respects:
Principally, however, that to the Jews were given the promises of God.

But what since some of them disbelieved the promises?
Will not their unbelief frustrate the promise of God?
By no means:
For God will be faithful, though every man be false:
As it is written—
Thou wilt be justified in thy decisions,
And be irreproachable in thy judgments.

But, if our unbelief display the faithfulness of God,
What am I saying?
Is not God unjust in inflicting punishment?
I speak as an objector.

By no means:
In that case how shall God judge the world?

For if the veracity of God hath by my fault become more conspicuous,
Why notwithstanding am I also punished as a sinner?
And why may we not say,
As we are misrepresented,
And as some affirm that we teach,
Let us do evil because good will ensue from it?
Their punishment is just.

What, however, is our conclusion?
Have we any religious prerogative?
None whatever.
For we have already proved that all, both Jews and Gentiles, are sinful;
So that every person must be put to silence,
And the whole world be acknowledged guilty before God.

THE METHOD OF JUSTIFICATION.

Justification is by Grace.

Therefore, through works of law not any man shall be justified before him,
For by law comes only knowledge of sin;
But now, apart from law, God's method of justification is manifested,
Witness having been borne to it by the law and the prophets.

Even God's method of justification
By faith in Jesus Christ,
For all without exception who trust in him,
For there is no distinction,
For all have sinned and forfeited the favour of God;
They being justified without regard to merit,
Through his undeserved favour,
Through the redemption effected by Christ Jesus.

Him hath God set forth a propitiatory sacrifice through faith in his blood-shedding,
For a demonstration of his justice in passing by previous sins through the forbearance of God,
For a demonstration of his justice also at the present time;
In order that he may be just and may justify him [who seeketh it] by faith.

Justification is by Faith.

Where now [in the matter of justification] is boasting?
It is excluded.
On what principle, however, [can it be excluded]?
On the principle of justification by works?
No: but only on the principle of justification by faith.
Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith,
Apart from works of law.

Do we, then, render law inoperative on the principle of justification by faith?
By no means:
Rather we establish law.

Justification by Faith as bearing on Jewish Privilege.

Will God henceforth be the God of the Jews only;
Or will he not be the God of the Gentiles also?
Assuredly he will be the God of the Gentiles also;
For by one act of grace he will, by faith, justify both the circumcised and the uncircumcised.

What, then, do we allow that our father Abraham gained by his circumcision?
[Was he not justified by works?
By no means.]

For if Abraham was justified by works he had cause of glorying;
Not before God, however, [hath any man cause of glorying.]

Further, what saith the Scriptures?
Abraham believed in God and it was reckoned for his justification.

Now to him who worketh [for justification]
The reward is not reckoned a favour, but a debt;
But to him who doth not work for it, but believeth in order to be justified as ungodly,
Faith is reckoned for justification.

As also David describeth the blessedness of the man whom the Lord justifieth without works:
Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven,
And whose transgressions are covered:
Blessed is the man to whom the Lord doth not reckon sin.

This privilege, then, doth it pertain to the circumcised only, or also to the uncircumcised?
Now we are told that Abraham's faith was reckoned for his justification.
At what period, then, was it so reckoned?
After he was circumcised? or when he was uncircumcised?
Not after he was circumcised but when he was uncircumcised.
And the mark of circumcision he received as a token of his justification by faith when he was uncircumcised:
So that he is an exemplar of all who believe being uncircumcised,
To show that their faith will also be reckoned for their justification;
And an exemplar of circumcised persons also,
To show that they must be, not circumcised only, but imitators of our father Abraham's faith when uncircumcised.

For not through law was the promise to Abraham or to his seed that he should be heir of the world,
But through his justification by faith.
Now if those who claim by law be heirs,
Faith is rendered useless, and the promise is annulled.

Further, law tends to produce punishment,
But where there is not a law neither is there transgression.

Therefore the blessing comes through faith that it may come by grace;
In order that the promise may be sure to all the seed,
Not to those only who are such being circumcised,
But to those also who are such by imitating Abraham's faith.
He is father of us all—[the circumcised and the uncircumcised]—
As it is written—
A father of diverse nations I have made thee.

[Abraham was made the exemplar of believers] because he so firmly believed in God,
Who giveth life to the dead,
And speaketh of things which are not possible as though they were.
Although it was beyond hope, he confidently believed
That he should become the father of a large posterity;
According to the declaration, So shall thy seed be.

Being not weak in faith,
He considered not the deadness of his own body,
He being an hundred years old,
Neither the deadness of Sarah's womb,
[She being past age].
At the promise of God he did not hesitate through unbelief,
But he was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God.
And was fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform.
For this reason was it recorded that his faith was reckoned for his justification.

Not for a personal reason only, however, was this recorded,
But for our instruction also, to whom our faith will be reckoned for our justification,
If we believe in him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.
He was delivered to deathf or our sins,
And was raised again for our justification.

The Federal Principle in Justification.

Now, as by one man sin entered into the world,
And by that sin death;
And so death extended to all men,
Because therein all men had sinned—

Now, before the [Mosaic] law [death-entailing] sin was in the world:
Sin, however, is not reckoned if no law exists:
Yet death had dominion from Adam till Moses,
Even over those who had not sinned like Adam.

He [Adam] was a type of the future [Saviour]—
Yet not like the transgression is the act of grace.

For if by one man's transgression the many have become subject to death,
The grace of God, and the act of grace by one man, Jesus Christ, shall yield to the many more abundant blessing.
And not like the consequences of the one transgression are those of the act of grace.
For the sentence pronounced punishment for a single transgression;
But the act of grace provides justification from many transgressions.
For if, through the system which entailed death by the transgression of one man,
Death hath prevailed by a single transgression,
Much more through the method of abounding grace and free justification
Happiness shall prevail through a single righteousness.
Of Jesus Christ.

Thus as by one sin came upon all men sentence of death,
So by one righteousness cometh upon all men happiness through justification.
For, as in virtue of the disobedience of the one man the many have been treated as sinners,
So, in virtue of the obedience of the one man shall the many be treated as righteous.

The Relation of the Moral Law to the Covenant of Redemption.

It is true that, under the operation of moral law, sins have been multiplied:
But where sin hath abounded grace hath much more abounded,
So that still, as sin prevailed to the diffusion of death,
Grace prevaileth to the bestowment of eternal happiness, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE PRIVILEGES OF JUSTIFICATION.

The Believer's Present Happiness.

Now having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
Through whom we have access into this state of favour in which we have been placed.

Thus we rejoice in hope of the approval of God.
And not only so, but we rejoice in our sufferings [for his sake].

[We rejoice in sufferings for his sake]
Knowing that such sufferings give occasion to constancy,
And that constancy affordeth evidence of our sincerity,
And evidence of our sincerity strengtheneth hope,
And such hope putteth not to shame:

Because the love of God is poured into our hearts, by the Holy Spirit which is given to us.

For Christ, when we were utterly helpless,
At the appointed time, died for us ungodly.
Now, scarcely for a righteous man will any one die;
Although for a benefactor, perhaps, some one may dare to die;
But his love towards us God hath signalized in this,
That when we were enemies Christ died for us.
Assuredly, then, having now been justified through his blood-shedding,
We shall be delivered from calamity through him.
For since, when we were enemies, we were brought into friendship with God by the death of his Son,
Having been made friends, we shall assuredly be delivered from calamity through his life.
And not only so, but we rejoice in God also, through our Lord Jesus Christ,
Through whom we have now entered into friendship with him.

The Believer's Future Happiness.

Now, if Christ be in you,
Although the body is subject to death through sin,
The soul is happy through justification.
And, if the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you,
He who raised up Christ from the dead will also raise [in glory] your dead bodies,
By his Spirit who dwelleth in you.

Therefore, brethren, we are under no obligation to corruption, to live corruptly,
For, if ye live corruptly, ye will suffer perdition:
[But we are under obligation to holiness, to live holily;]
For, if, by holiness, ye subdue the exercises of corruption, ye will be happy.

Further, whoever are led by the Spirit of God,
These are sons of God.
For ye have not received a servile temper, tending again to fear;
But ye have received a filial temper, by which we cry, Father, Father.
The Spirit himself jointly witnesseth with our spirit
That we are children of God.
And if we are children then are we also heirs,
Heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ.

[It is true, indeed, that we suffer with him;]
If, however, we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified with him:
And I reckon our present sufferings not comparable with the glory to be revealed to us.

Now, in earnest expectation all mankind await the consummated happiness of the sons of God.
For mankind were subjected to death,
Not by their own desert,
But by a sovereign act of God,
In hope that the whole race should be delivered from this bondage of corruption,
And be made sharers of the glorious liberation of the sons of God.

It is obvious that mankind groan and travail in pain together until now.
Nor only they, but also those who enjoy the firstfruits of the Spirit,
Even we ourselves inwardly groan,
Longing for the consummation of our happiness,
The [glorious] resurrection of our body.

Now this hoped-for happiness is part of our salvation.
It is not an object possessed, however, inasmuch as it is an object of hope:
For what a man possesseth how can he yet hope for?
But, if we hope for what we do not possess,
With patience we wait for it.

Also, the Spirit concurrently helpeth our weakness.
For what we should pray for in this respect as it behoves we do not know;
But the Spirit himself intercedeth instead of us,
With inarticulate groanings.
And the Searcher of hearts understandeth the meaning of the Spirit,
Because by the will of God he intercedeth instead of saints.

The Believer's Security.

Now we know that,
To those who love God,
All things work together for good,
To those who are called according to his purpose.

For those whom he foreknew he also foreordained
To be conformed to the image of his Son,
That he might be the first-born among many brethren.
And those whom he foreordained he also called,
And those whom he called he also justified,
And those whom he justified he also glorified.

The Believer's Triumph.

What, then, shall we say to these things?

If God be for us,
Who can be against us?

He who spared not his own Son,
But delivered him to death for us all,
How will he not,
With him,
Freely give us all things?

Who will bring a charge against God's beloved?
It is God who justifieth them:
Who is he that can condemn them?
It is Christ who died [for them,]
Rather, indeed, who hath been raised from the dead.
He is even at the right hand of God;
He also maketh intercession for us.

What will sever us from the love of Christ?
Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution,
Or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?
As it is written—
For thy sake we are exposed to death all the day,
We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.
Nay: in all these we more than conquer, through him who loved us.

For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life,
Neither angels, nor principalities, nor powers,
Neither things present, nor things to come,
Neither height, nor depth, nor any other created being,
Will be able to sever us from the love of God through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Section II.—Of Sanctification.

The Grace of God no reason for Sin.

What, then, may we infer [from this superabounding grace]?
Shall we continue in sin, in order that grace may abound?

By no means.
We who have died to sin, how can we any longer live in subjection to it?

Or remember ye not that, when we made our profession of Christ Jesus by baptism, we were baptized in a mode resembling his death?
Now, having been baptized in a mode resembling his death, we have in a similar manner been buried as he was.
Consequently, as Christ was raised from the dead [to a new life] for the glory of the Father,
We also should rise to a new life [for the glory of the Father].
For if we have been, in a figure, united with him in his death,
We should be so likewise in his resurrection.

This also should be considered, that our former self is crucified as he was,
And thus the bondman of sin is virtually slain,
So that we cannot now be slaves to sin.
For the slave who is dead is freed [from all masters;
And we, therefore, being dead to it, are freed] from sin.
And if we have died like Christ, we are sure that, like him, we shall also live.

Now we know that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dieth
no more;
Death hath no further right of dominion over him.
For in that he died, [in expiation for sin] he died once for all;
And in that he liveth, he liveth [evermore] to do the will of God.

So likewise reckon ye yourselves [to be both dead and alive]:
On the one hand, dead to [the rule of] sin,
On the other hand, alive [evermore] to [do the will of] God;
Like Christ Jesus.

Let not sin, therefore, rule over your dead person by your obeying
its impulses;
Neither yield your faculties to sin as instruments of unrighteous-
ness:
But devote yourselves to God as persons whose former self is dead,
and who live anew;
And yield your faculties to God as instruments of righteousness.

For sin shall not have dominion over you.

A State of Favour no reason for Sin.

[It is true that] we are not subject to legal penalties, but in a state of
favour.
But what is to be inferred from this?

Shall we sin because we are not subject to legal penalties, but in a
state of favour?
By no means.

Know ye not that, whomsoever ye willingly obey, ye are servants of
him ye obey;
Whether servants of sin to perdition, or of obedience to justification?
Now God be thanked that ye were slaves of sin,
But ye have cordially moulded yourselves by the doctrine in which
ye were instructed;
And, being emancipated from sin, have become servants of
righteousness:

I use a common metaphor for easier illustration:
For as ye have yielded yourselves servants to uncleanness and
iniquity by practising iniquity,
So ye now yield yourselves servants to righteousness by practising
holiness.
As, when ye were servants of sin, ye were estranged from righteous-
ness.

Further, what fruit had ye formerly?
Of those things ye are now ashamed,
And the end of those things is perdition:
But now, being emancipated from sin, and become servants to God,
Ye have your fruit unto holiness,
And the end will be eternal happiness.

Now the wages of sin is perdition:
But the gift of God is eternal happiness through Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Believer's Release from the condemning power of the Law.

Do you not understand, brethren,
(For I speak to those who know [the principles of] law,)
That a law hath a claim over a person only so long as [the source of its obligation] existeth?

For example, a woman who hath an husband is bound by the conjugal law only as long as he liveth;
But, if her husband be dead, she is released from conjugal obligation.
So, if, while her husband is living she be married to another man, she will be an adulteress;
But, if her husband be dead, she is released from the conjugal law,
So that she will not be an adulteress although she be married to another man.

After a similar manner, my brethren, the law has become dead to you
By the death of Christ;
So that ye may be married to another,
To him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may live acceptably to God.

For when we were under the law,
Sinful affections which were [disapproved] by the law
Wrought in us deeds exposing us to condemnation;
But now [that we are in a state of favour],
We are released from [the condemning power of] the law,
That being impotent by which we were subjected to it.
We thus serve God with a new spirit of freedom,
And not under the old liability to punishment.

The Law not worthy of Blame.

What, then, may be inferred from this statement?
Is the law worthy of blame?

By no means.
I should not, indeed, have become conscious of sin but by the law.
For example, I should not have been conscious of lust, unless the law had said Thou shalt not lust.

But it was sin, which, deriving its power to condemn from the commandment, excited in me affections [consciously evil and destructive];
For, apart from the law, sin was inoperative [to this effect].
For once, when I was ignorant of the law, I was happy;
But, when the commandment came home to me, sin became active and I wretched.

And the commandment which was adapted to make me happy I
found to be a cause of misery;
Because sin, deriving its power from the commandment, led me into
evil, and by it destroyed me.

This, however, only shows that the law is holy,
And the commandment holy, and just, and good.

Sin the true Cause of Misery.

That which is good, then, has become a cause of misery to me?
By no means.

[Not the law], but sin [was the true cause of my misery].
So that sin shows its true character:
By that which is good it makes me miserable;
So that by means of the commandment sin exhibits its extreme
malignity.

The Believer's Torment by Sin, and its Mitigations.

[And sin still makes me miserable.]
For we know that the law requires holiness;
I, however, am prone to evil, enslaved by sin;
So that what I practise I do not approve.

For I do not perform that which I prefer,
But I do that which I hate.
If, however, I do not prefer that which I do, I acquiesce in the
goodness of the law;
And it is not so much I who do it as sin dwelling in me.

I acknowledge that in me, as unrenewed, a holy impulse does not
dwell:
For although I prefer what is holy, I cannot perform it.

For I do not do good, which I prefer;
But I do evil, which I do not prefer.
If, however, I do what I do not prefer,
It is not so much I who do it as sin dwelling in me.

On the other hand, I detect a force opposing me when I desire to do
good,
Because evil prevails over me.
For I delight in the divine impulse actuating my renewed man;
But I detect another force in my corrupt nature thwarting the im-
pulse of my renewed nature,
And enslaving me to the [sinful] force in my corrupt nature.

Thus I personally [act a twofold part]:
In my renewed nature I am actuated by a holy impulse,
But in my corrupt nature by a sinful impulse.

O wretched man that I am!
Who will release me from this dead carcase?
I thank God [that], through Jesus Christ our Lord, [there is relief].

This struggle doth not entail condemnation on those who believe in Christ Jesus.
And the power of holiness, which tendeth to happiness through Christ Jesus,
Hath released me from the power of sin which tendeth to perdition.
For the thing which was impracticable by the law,
Because it was powerless through corruption,
God [hath accomplished]:
Having sent his own Son,
In the nature of sinful man,
And to make expiation for sin,
He hath punished sin in human nature:
So that the precepts of the law may be fulfilled by us [who believe in him],
And walk not corruptly, but holily.

For those who are corrupt prefer corrupt things,
And those who are holy prefer holy things:
Now the preference of corrupt things is perdition,
And the preference of holy things is happiness and joy.
Because the preference of corrupt things is enmity towards God;
For it is not conformable to the law of God,
Neither, indeed, can it be so.
Those, therefore, who are corrupt, cannot be pleasing to God.

You, however, are not corrupt, but holy,
Since the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.
Now if any one have not the Spirit of Christ he is not his.

DIDACTIC PORTION.—Part II.

Section I.—Of Justification.

The Apostle's ardent Love for his Brethren.

I affirm truly as a Christian,
I do not lie,
The Holy Spirit also bearing me inward witness,
That I suffer much grief and incessant heartfelt sorrow,
[If it were possible] I could wish myself to be separated from Christ for them,
On account of my brethren, my natural kinsmen.

They are the descendants of Israel:
To them pertain the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants,
And the giving of the law, and the ritual, and the promises:
Their progenitors are the patriarchs,
And descended from them is the Christ,
Who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

THE RECEPTION OF THE GOSPEL IN THE WORLD.

Its effectual Cause—the Sovereignty of God.

God not Unfaithful.

Not that it is possible that the promise of God should have failed.

But they are not all Israel [spiritually] who are descended from Israel,
As not all were heirs [naturally] because they were children of Abraham.
For [the promise was in these terms]:
Thy seed by Isaac shall be preferred.
That is, not the natural children [of Abraham] are those intended by God,
But the children by promise are reckoned as the seed:
For [respecting the birth of Isaac] there was this promise—
In due season I will come, and by Sarah there shall be a son.

Nor is this the only [example of sovereignty].
When Rebecca had conceived by one, by our father Isaac—
And this was said when the children were not yet born,
And when they had done neither good nor evil,
In order that the discriminating purpose of God might stand,
Not of merit but of sovereignty.
It was said to her,
The elder shall serve the younger.
As it is written—
I have preferred Jacob, and rejected Esau.

Isaiah also crieth concerning Israel—
Although the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea,
A remnant only shall be delivered;
For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness,
Because he will make a brief reckoning with the land.

Isaiah also had previously said [respecting Judah],
Except the Lord of hosts had left us a seed,
We had been like Sodom, and had resembled Gomorrah.

God not Unjust.

Do we then say that God is unrighteous [in dealing thus]?
By no means.

For to Moses he saith—
I will show mercy where I will show mercy,
And I will compassionate those whom I will compassionate.
In this respect, therefore, it is not of him that willeth, or of him that striveth,
But of God who is pleased to show mercy.

The Scripture saith also concerning Pharaoh,—
For this very purpose I have raised thee up,
That I might show my power towards thee,
And that my glory might be proclaimed in all the earth.
Thus, not only whom he will he treateth kindly,
But whom he will he treateth severely.

Thou wilt say, then, to me, Why doth he still lay blame?
For who hath frustrated his purpose?

Nay, O man: who art thou that thou shouldest dispute with God?
The moulded vessel doth not say to the moulder, Why hast thou made me thus?
Or hath not the potter power over the clay,
Of the same mass to make one vessel for a use more honourable, and one for a use less honourable?

And what if God—
Having determined to show his wrath,
And to display his power,
Endured with much longsuffering vessels of wrath fitted to destruction,
[And ultimately visited them with signal judgment:
Is this to be complained of?]

And [what if God—
Having determined] to display his richest grace on vessels of mercy whom he had appointed to glory,
Even on us whom he hath called, not Jews only but Gentiles,
[Bestowed on them all spiritual blessings through Christ Jesus:
Is this to be complained of?]

As he saith by Hosea—
I will call them my people who were not my people,
And her beloved who was not beloved:
And it shall be in the place where it was said unto them Ye are not my people,
There they shall be called the sons of the living God.

Its instrumental Cause—Jewish Unbelief.

What, then, are the facts?
The Gentiles, who did not seek after justification, have attained it;
While the Jews, who did seek after justification, have not attained it.

And what is the reason?
[On the one hand, the Gentiles accepted] justification by faith;

[On the other, Israel] sought it not by faith, but by works.
For they stumbled at the stumbling-block,
As it is written:
Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling-block and rock of offence;
But whosoever trusteth in him shall not be confounded.

THE GREAT STUMBLING-BLOCK.

Jews may be saved by their own Scriptures.

Brethren, my heartfelt desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.

For I acknowledge that they are zealously devout,
Although they are not guided by correct knowledge.
For, being unacquainted with God's method of justification,
And being bent on making good their own method of justification,
To God's method of justification they have not submitted themselves.

Now Christ is the scope of the ritual law in relation to justification,
[And he is so for the justification] of every one who trusteth in him.

For Moses describeth the method of justification by the ritual law thus—
The man that doeth these things shall live by them.

But he elsewhere describeth a method of justification by faith, thus—
Say not in thine heart Who shall ascend into heaven?
That is, to bring Christ down from above:
Or Who shall descend into the abyss?
That is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.
But how does he proceed?
He saith—
The thing required is near thee,
In thy mouth and in thy mind.

Now this describeth the method of justification by faith
Which we publish:
That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus,
And shalt believe with thy mind that God hath raised him from the dead,
Thou shalt be saved:
For with the mind man believeth to justification,
And with the mouth he maketh confession to salvation.

The preaching of the Gospel necessary for the Gentiles.

Now the Scripture saith—
Whosoever believeth on him shall not be confounded.
There is, therefore, no difference between the Jew and the Gentile,
For the same Lord over all is merciful to all who confess him:
[Again it saith—]

Whosoever shall confess the name of the Lord shall be saved.
But how shall they confess him on whom they have not believed?
And how shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard?
And how shall they hear unless one publish the glad tidings?
And how shall any publish it unless they be sent?

As it is written:
How beautiful are the feet of those who publish good news of peace,
Who bring glad tidings of good things!

So, then, faith presupposeth hearing the glad tidings,
And hearing the glad tidings is by the appointment of God.

Not all [the Gentiles], however, have obeyed the glad tidings.
[I admit this]:
For [to them may be applied what] Isaiah saith—
Lord, Who hath believed our report?

But I reply, Have they not all heard it?
Yes, verily: for [to this may be applied the language]—
Their sound went out into all the earth,
And their words unto the end of the world.

THE FACTS IN THEIR SCRIPTURAL ASPECT.

The Facts were Foreseen and Foretold.

I now ask, did not Israel always know that things would be thus?

First Moses saith—
I will excite you to emulation by those who are not my people,
And by an idolatrous nation will I provoke you.

But Isaiah groweth bolder, and saith—
I have been found by those who did not seek me,
I have manifested myself to those who did not inquire after me.

While concerning Israel he saith—
The whole day I have stretched out my hands
To a people disobedient and refractory.

A Remnant of Israel is Saved.

I ask, then,
Hath God cast away his [whole] people?

By no means.
For I myself am an Israelite,
Of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

God hath not cast away his chosen people.
Do you not recollect what the Scripture containeth concerning Elijah,

How he pleadeth with God respecting Israel, saying,
Lord, they have killed thy prophets,
And overthrown thine altars;
And I alone am left,
And they seek my life?
But what did the Divine Oracle reply to him?
I have reserved to myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.
So at the present time there is a remnant according to God's gracious choice.

Now, if the inheritance of spiritual blessings be by grace, then it is not of works,
Otherwise grace is no more grace:
But if it is by works, then it is not by grace,
Otherwise works are no more works.

The general Result stated.

What, then, is the fact?
Not all Israel have obtained the justification sought for;
But the chosen people have obtained it,
And the rest have been blinded:
According as it is written—
God hath given them the spirit of slumber,
Eyes not adapted to see,
And ears not fitted to hear.
Until this day.
David also saith—
Let their table be made a snare and a trap,
And a stumbling-block and a recompense to them;
Let their eyes be darkened that they may not see,
And bow down their back alway.

The whole Nation will be ultimately Saved.

I now ask,
Have Israel so stumbled that they will fall?
By no means.

On the other hand, by occasion of their stumbling salvation is published to the Gentiles,
So that this may excite them to emulation.

And if their adversity thus promote the happiness of the world,
[How much more would their prosperity?]
And if their impoverishment increase the wealth of the world,
How much more would their abundance?

Now I speak thus to you Gentiles, both because I am the apostle of the Gentiles,
I claim the right of my office,
And in order that I may provoke my kinsmen to emulation,
And may save some of them.

And if their rejection lead to the conversion of the world,
What would their restoration be but a resurrection of the dead?

Now, if the corn of the firstfruit be holy, so is the dough;
And if the root be holy, so are the branches.
And if some of the branches have been broken off,
And thou, a wild olive, hast been grafted in among them,
And with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree,
Glory not over the [broken] branches.
Or, if thou glory, [remember thy position]:
Not thou bearest the root, but the root thee.

Thou wilt say, then,
The branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.

[True]: but because of unbelief they were broken off,
And thou holdest thy privilege by faith.
Be not, therefore, elated,
But be careful:
For, since God spared not the natural branches,
Take heed lest he also spare not thee.

Recognize herein both the kindness and the severity of God:
Towards those who have stumbled severity,
But towards thee the kindness of God;
If thou continue [by faith] in the privilege conferred,
Otherwise thou also will be cut off.

And they also, if they abide not in unbelief, shall be grafted in again:
For God is able to graft them in again.
For, if thou wert cut out of the naturally wild olive tree,
And wert grafted contrary to nature into the good olive tree,
How much more easily shall the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be uninformed of this mystery,
Lest ye should have a high conceit of yourselves,
That temporary blindness hath occurred to Israel
Until the fulness of the Gentiles is come in,
And then all Israel shall be saved.

As it is written:
There shall come out of Zion a deliverer,
And he shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob;
For this is my covenant with them
When I shall take away their sins.

God's adorable Wisdom in this Dispensation.

As to spiritual privileges, they are treated as enemies for your sakes;
But as to their interest in God's favour, they are still beloved for the fathers' sakes:
For the gifts and calling of God are irreversible.

As in times past ye were disobedient to God,
  But have now obtained mercy by occasion of their disobedience;
Even so have they by occasion of the mercy shown to you become disobedient,
  So that they also become fit objects of mercy.
Thus God has found all to be disobedient,
So that all will be equally indebted to his grace.

O the unfathomable riches both of the wisdom and skilfulness of God!
How unsearchable are his judgments,
And his ways past finding out!
For who hath known the mind of the Lord?
Or who hath been his counsellor?
Or who hath first given to him that it may be repaid him again?
For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things;
To whom be glory for ever. Amen.

Section 2.—Of Sanctification.

The General Scope of Christian Duty.

I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the tender mercies of God,
To present yourselves to him a living sacrifice,
Holy, acceptable to God:
A rational service from you.

Also, do not conform yourselves to this world,
But transform yourselves by the renovation of your mind,
That you may exemplify the will of God,
The good, the acceptable, and the perfect.

The Duties of Christian Fellowship.

Further, in virtue of the office conferred upon me, I enjoin on every [gifted] person among you,
Not to exalt himself above due measure,
But to conduct himself modestly,
Because it is God who hath dealt to every man the measure of supernatural power.

Now, as in one body we have many members,
  And all members have not the same function;
So we, being many, constitute one body as Christians,
  And are diversely adapted to each other's benefit.

Having, then, diversified gifts according to the position conferred on us,
[Let us severally use them for the edification of all.]
If we have the gift of prophecy, let us restrict it to the truth revealed to us;
  If we have talents for service, let us actively employ them.

He who teacheth, let him be fervent in teaching;
He who exhorteth, let him be earnest in exhortation.
He who distributeth alms, let him do it with impartiality;
He who conducteth affairs, let him do it with diligence;
He who visiteth the sick, let him do it with promptness.

The Christian's Personal Duties.

Duty towards God.

Do not avoid active services.
Cherish fervent devoutness.
Serve the Lord.

Duty towards Fellow-Christians.

In brotherly love be tenderly affectionate towards one another:
In offices of kindness emulate one another.
Rejoice with those who rejoice;
Weep with those who weep.

Cultivate mutual concord.
Do not aspire after high things;
But respect the meanest of your brethren.
Be not tenacious of your own opinion.

Duty towards all Men.

Cultivate undissembled benevolence.
Avoid whatever is injurious;
Pursue whatever is useful.
Return to no one evil for evil.

Study amiableness towards all men.
If possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

Duty under Persecution.

Rejoice in hope;
Be patient in tribulation;
Continue instant in prayer.

Relieve the necessities of saints;
Be freely hospitable to them.

Duty towards Persecutors.

Bless those who persecute you;
Bless, but do not curse them.

Avenge not yourselves, dearly beloved,
But rather allow the course of divine wrath:
For it is written, Retribution is my part,
I will repay, saith the Lord.

For this purpose, if thine enemy hunger, feed him;
If he thirst, give him drink:
For, by so doing, thou wilt heap coals of fire on his head.
Be not overcome by evil,
But overcome evil by good.

The Christian's Political Duty.

Let every person be obedient to the governing authorities.
For there is no government but of God;
All existing governments are instituted by God.
Whosoever, therefore, resisteth government resisteth an institution of God,
And those who resist will expose themselves to just punishment.

Now rulers are not intended as a terror to well-conducted persons,
But to ill-conducted persons.
Wilt thou, therefore, not be afraid of the ruler?
Conduct thyself well, and thou mayest expect praise from him;
For he is a minister of God to thee for good:
But, if thou conduct thyself ill, be afraid of him;
For he cannot be expected to bear the sword in vain,
Since he is an avenging minister of God for the punishment of an evildoer.

Ye must needs be obedient, however,
Not only through fear of punishment, but also through sense of duty.

For the same reason, also, pay ye the public imposts.
For [both rulers and collectors] are God's ministers attending to this matter.

Render to all their dues:
Tribute to whom tribute is due;
Custom to whom custom;
Fear to whom fear;
Honour to whom honour.

The Christian's Social Duty.

You owe no man anything but to love one another:
For he that loveth another hath fulfilled [the second table of] the law.

For this—
Thou shalt not commit adultery,
Thou shalt not kill,
Thou shalt not steal,
Thou shalt not covet—
And if there be any other [similar] commandment,

In one precept all are comprehended,
In this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

He that loveth his neighbour doeth him no harm,
Therefore love is the fulfilment of the law.

The Christian's Duty before the World.

Let us behave ourselves decorously, like persons in the daytime;
Not in rioting and drunkenness;
Not in chambering and wantonness;
Not in strife and envying:
But imitate ye the Lord Jesus Christ,
And do not let the business of your life be sensual enjoyment.

And this more especially considering the advanced period [of our Christian profession,
Which warns us] that it is now high time to arouse ourselves from slumber,
Since our knowledge of the Gospel is more perfect than when we entered on it.

The night has passed away and the day has come;
Let us therefore cast off entirely raiment fitted only to darkness,
And clothe ourselves in a manner adapted to the light.

The Christian's Duty towards Weak Brethren.

Part I.—Section I.

Him who is weak in the faith receive ye [into fellowship],
But do not eagerly discuss non-essential points.

One believeth that he may eat all things,
Another, who is weak, eateth only herbs.

Let not him who eateth despise him who eateth not;
And let not him who eateth not condemn him who eateth;
For God hath accepted him.
[For he is another man's servant.]

Who art thou who condemnest another man's servant?
By [the judgment of] his own master he standeth or falleth.
Yea, [the strong brother] shall be sustained,
For the Lord will sustain him.
One esteemeth one day above another,
Another esteemeth all days alike.

Let every person make up his own mind.

Part I.—Section II.

He who regardeth the day, according to [his view of] the will of the Lord he regardeth it,
And he who regardeth not the day, according to [his view of] the will of the Lord he regardeth it not.
He who eateth meat, according to [his view of] the will of the Lord he eateth it,
For he giveth God thanks.
And he who eateth not, according to [his view of] the will of the Lord he eateth not,
And he also giveth God thanks.

For none of us liveth according to his own will,
And none of us dieth according to his own will:
But, whether we live, we live according to the will of the Lord,
Or, whether we die, we die according to the will of the Lord;
Whether, therefore, we live or die, we are subject to the will of the Lord.
To this end, indeed, Christ both died and rose again,
That he might have dominion over both the dead and the living.

Why dost thou, on the one hand, condemn thy brother?
Or why dost thou, on the other hand, despise thy brother?

For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God.
For it is written:
As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,
And every tongue shall confess to God.
So, then, every one of us shall give an account of himself to God.
No longer, therefore, let us condemn one another.

Part II.—Section I.

A.

[No longer, therefore, let us condemn one another.]
But act on this principle, not to present a stumbling-block to a brother, or an occasion of sin.

I am certain, by the will of the Lord Jesus, that no food is unclean in itself;
To him who regardeth food as unclean, however, it is unclean.

Now, if thy brother be injured by thy food,
Thou art acting not kindly [to eat it.]
Do not by thy food injure one for whom Christ died.
Let not thy right [to eat] be so asserted as to expose thee to censure.

Practical Christianity consisteth not in eating or drinking [food of any kind];
But in uprightness, kindness, and holy joy.
For the rest, he who regardeth the will of God is accepted by God,
And worthy of approbation by men.

B

Let us thus pursue the course most conducive to peace,
And to the edification of one another.

Do not, for the sake of food, obstruct the progress of the Gospel.
All kinds of food, indeed, are clean;
But sin is committed by him who by eating causeth mischief.

It is praiseworthy neither to eat meat, nor to drink wine,
Nor to do any thing by which thy brother stumbleth, or is ensnared, or enfeebled.

Hast thou full persuasion [of thy liberty]?
Use it for thyself in the sight of God.
Happy is he who exposeth not himself to censure in exercising his liberty.
He who doubteth, however, is guilty if he eat,
Because he eateth without full persuasion [of his liberty]:
For whatever is done without full persuasion [of its rectitude] is sinful.

Part II.—Section. II.

Further, we who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak,
And not to pursue a course of self-pleasing.
Every one should rather please his neighbour [than himself],
For his good, to his edification.

Thus even Christ pleased not himself;
But [in his life it was] as it is written:
The reproaches of those who reproached thee have fallen upon me.

Now the God of patience and comfort grant you to feel towards each other as Jesus Christ felt,
That unanimously, without disputes, ye may worship God,
Even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Wherefore receive ye one another [to fellowship],
As Christ also hath received [us all],
To the glory of God.

EPISTOLARY PORTION.—Part II.

Of Jew and Gentile.

Now the ancient Scriptures were written for our instruction,
That we, through patience and comfort derived from the Scriptures,
might cherish this hope.

I affirm that Jesus Christ had a mission to the circumcised in relation
to the truth of God,
In order to fulfil the promises made to the fathers;
[And that he had also a mission to the Gentiles,
In order to fulfil the promises respecting them];
That the Gentiles also may glorify God for his mercy,

As it is written:
For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles,
And I will sing unto thy name.

And again [the Scripture] saith,
Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.

And again [the Scripture saith],
Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles,
And praise him, all ye people.

And again, Isaiah saith,
There shall be a root of Jesse,
And he shall rise to reign over the Gentiles,
In him shall the Gentiles trust.

May God who has given you this hope fill you with great joy and
peace in assurance of it,
That ye may fully realize it by the help of the Holy Spirit.

Personal Topics.

Now I am persuaded, my brethren,
Even I myself respecting you,
That you are full of kindness,
Of enlarged knowledge,
And able to admonish one another.

The more freely, however, have I written to you, brethren,
Although in part reminding you of what you already know,
Because of the office conferred on me by God;
That I should be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles,
Making known to them the glad tidings from God;
In order that the offering of the Gentile converts may be acceptable,
It being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

I have, therefore, a ground of confidence through Christ Jesus in speaking of divine things.
[And in saying this I am not arrogant],
Since I speak only of what Christ hath wrought through me for the conversion of the Gentiles,
By preaching and by labours,
By mighty signs and wonders,
By the Holy Spirit;
So that from Jerusalem, and round about it as far as Illyricum,
I have effectually published the glad tidings concerning Christ.

In such manner, indeed, have I endeavoured to publish the glad tidings,
Not so much where Christ had been confessed,
Lest I should build on another man's foundation;
But [where Christ had not been confessed;
That it might be] as it is written—
They to whom he had not been spoken of shall see,
And those who had not heard shall understand.

Owing to this I have long been hindered from coming to you;
But, having now no further scope in these parts,
And having had a strong desire to visit you for several years,
Whenever I may take my journey into Spain I will come to you.
For I hope to see you in my journey,
And to be brought on my way thitherward by you,
After having for a time been gratified by your company.

More immediately, indeed, I am going to Jerusalem,
In order to minister to the saints;
For [the disciples of] Macedonia and Achaia have kindly made a contribution for the poor saints at Jerusalem.
They have done it kindly, indeed, but not without a just obligation:
For, if the Gentiles have partaken of their spiritual privileges,
They ought to minister to their carnal necessities.

When, however, I have performed this service,
And safely delivered to them this bounty,
I will travel by you into Spain:
And I am sure that, in visiting you,
I shall come with an abundant blessing from Christ.

Now I beseech you, brethren,
For our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,
And as an expression of your love for me,
To wrestle with me in prayer to God on my account,
That I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judæa,
And that my service at Jerusalem may be accepted by the saints;
So that I may come to you with joy by the will of God,
And may be refreshed with you.

The God of peace be with you all. Amen.

Salutations.

I commend to you Phœbe, our sister,
A deaconess of the church in Cenchræa;
That ye may receive her in the Lord worthily of saints,
And may assist her in whatsoever business she may need it;
For she hath been a succourer of many,
And of myself also.

Greet Priscilla and Aquila,
My fellow-workers in Christ Jesus,
Who for my life have laid down their own neck;
To whom not only I give thanks,
But all the Gentile churches.
And the church which is in their house.

Greet Epenetus, my beloved,
Who is the firstfruits of Asia to Christ.

Greet Mary, who has laboured much for us.

Greet Andronicus and Junia,
My kinsmen and fellow-prisoners,
Who are highly esteemed among the apostles,
Who also were Christians before me.

Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord.

Greet Urbanus, our fellow-labourer in Christ,
And Stachys, my beloved.

Greet Apelles, an approved Christian.

Greet the converts in Aristobulus's household.

Greet Herodion, my kinsman.

Greet those in the family of Narcissus who are in the Lord.
Greet Tryphæna and Tryphosa, who have laboured in the Lord.
Greet the beloved Persis, who has laboured much in the Lord,

Greet Rufus, beloved of the Lord,
And his mother and mine.

Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas,
And the brethren who are with them.

Greet Philologus and Julia,
Nereus and his sister and Olympas,
And all the saints who are with them.

Greet one another with a pure salute.

All the churches of Christ salute you.

Now I beseech you, brethren, to mark those who cause dissensions and scandals contrary to the doctrine ye have learned,
And withdraw from them.
For such persons do not serve Christ our Lord, but seek their own advantage;
And by fair speaking and flattery they mislead the guileless.
Your regular walk, however, has become known to all,
And I rejoice, therefore, over you;
But I wish you to be discerning as to what is good,
And simple-minded as to what is evil.
Now the God of peace will bruise the adversary under your feet shortly.
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

There greet you Timothy, my fellow-labourer,
And Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen.

I greet you,
I, Tertius,
Who have written this Epistle,
In the Lord.

There greeteth you Gaius, the host of myself
And of the whole church.

There greeteth you Erastus, the steward of the city,
And Quartus, a brother.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

The Doxology.

Now to him who [alone] is able to give you assurance respecting my glad tidings,
And the truths published concerning Jesus Christ,
By the disclosure of the mystery from former ages concealed,
But made fully manifest now,
In accordance with the prophetical Scriptures,
[And,]
According to the will of the everlasting God,
For obedience by faith,
Proclaimed to all the nations;

To the only wise God,
Through Jesus Christ,
To him be glory
For ever. Amen.

MAN'S RESPONSE

TO THE

GOSPEL.

MAN'S RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL.

THE Gospel is one, as man's sin and ruin are one; and thus they are adapted the one to the other. God has but one thing to say to mankind, and he fitly says it in the same terms to all men. But man's heart is multiform, ever varying in its constitutional susceptibilities, and presenting different manifestations under the influence of the one and common appeal. There are great differences in the facility with which knowledge is admitted, and in the kind of feeling which is developed—the sorrowful, even to despondency or despair, the obstinate in various degrees of intensity, or the confiding and the hopeful, approaching to rapturous joy. The aspects of human character thus presented are assuredly not only the most interesting, but the most important, which can attract the attention of those who concern themselves with the dissemination of divine truth, since they at once manifest the power of the Gospel, and call for a practical treatment on which consequences of infinite moment may depend. Little attention can be devoted to them without its being perceived that this treatment requires much wisdom, and involves many difficulties; and the labourer in this department of spiritual toil may soon and often come to feel his unskilfulness, and to desire counsel. In this respect it has pleased God not very largely to furnish us with inspired exemplifications. As in morals we have a few general precepts for the direction of Christian duty rather than an extended system of casuistry, so, in relation to experience, have we rather the great truths by which it is to be excited and regulated, than a specific treatment of its diversified manifestations. Under these circumstances Christian labourers, ministers and others, are fain at times to have recourse one to another for assistance in their judgment of particular cases, and in determining the most scriptural and effectual

treatment of them. Such aid is undoubtedly of great value. It is obvious, however, that this is only one ignorant and fallible mortal consulting another certainly equally fallible, and perhaps equally ignorant; and that no advice so given can properly be made more than matter for one's own consideration and decision. Could we ask Peter or Paul to solve our difficulties, we might be sure of getting an answer at once in harmony with Gospel truth, and expressive of Christian wisdom; but cases of treatment from the portfolios of uninspired men, however eminent, not only may, but must be looked upon in the light of Scripture, and in the exercise of an independent judgment.

With this prefatory remark, we proceed to introduce to the notice of our readers a work which has just issued from the press,* and in which assuredly every serious reader of it will feel deeply interested. It is from the pen of the late Dr. Spencer, an eminent Presbyterian minister at Brooklyn, in the United States. It contains no less than forty cases selected from his own ministerial experience, "sketches from real life—facts, not fancies." They are all graphically described, and some of them delineated with great power. They exhibit also on his part, not only singular pastoral industry and eminent faithfulness, but great tact, skilful discrimination, and sound judgment. The book is said to be reprinted "from the ninth American edition," and we cannot doubt but it will have an extensive sale in England.

The popularity of the work before us will undoubtedly be increased in consequence of its being ushered into the world —the English world, we mean—under the auspices of Mr. James, of Birmingham, who has written for it an Introduction of nearly eighty pages. This portion of the volume this distinguished and amiable man has devoted almost entirely to a discussion of "The means and methods to be adopted for a successful ministry," and it is enough to say that he has written it in a manner worthy of himself. Some points occurred to us as open to criticism; but as we continued to read, we felt we could not criticise it—it was

* "A Pastor's Sketches; or, Conversations with Anxious Inquirers respecting the Way of Salvation. By J. S. Spencer, D.D., Pastor of Second Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn, N. Y. With an Introduction and Editorial Notes, by J. A. James." London, 1855.

too good, too solemn, too faithful. We trust we felt humbled and stimulated by it, and we shall satisfy ourselves with recommending every minister of the Gospel to read it, and to read it in a spirit approaching as nearly as any human work will allow to that in which he reads the Bible.

We pass on to the Sketches, of which our readers will naturally expect that we should present to them some specimens; and we shall do so—not promiscuously, however, but in such a manner as to set before them the views entertained by Dr. Spencer of the work of the Holy Spirit, and thus to prepare the way for some remarks which we think it our duty to offer.

The third narrative is entitled, "Waiting for the Holy Spirit," and it contains the following passage:—

"'Oh, sir,' said she (the tears streaming from her eyes, and her sensations almost choking utterance); 'I would give all the world to be a Christian! I know I am a sinner, an undone sinner! I have a vile and wicked heart. I have sinned all my life! I wonder God has spared me so long.'

"'But he *has* spared you, madam; when you did not deserve it. And what has he spared you for, but that you should repent of sin, and flee to Christ for pardon?'

"'I would repent if I could. I want to be a Christian. But my hard, wicked heart is stronger than I! For years I have read my Bible, and struggled, and prayed; and it has done me no good! I am afraid I shall be cast off for ever! God has not given me his Spirit!'

"'I too am afraid you will be cast off for ever. Probably your danger is greater than you think! But there is mercy in Christ for the chief of sinners. His blood cleanseth from—'

"'I know it, sir; I know all that from my Bible. I have read it a thousand times. But I cannot *come* to Christ without the Holy Spirit.'

"'Madam, the text is plain, "If ye being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to—"'

"'But I am *not* one of his children, sir.'

"'The text does not say, *to his children*, my dear madam; it says, "*to them that ask him.*" "Ask, and ye shall receive."'

"'Oh! I *have* prayed—I *do* pray.'

"'Allow me to ask you, madam, how long you have been in this state of mind?'

"'About three years. I was first brought to think of my salvation soon after the birth of my first child; when my duty to my family led me to feel the need of religion. I could not have it baptized, for I was not a member of the church;* and what troubled me more, I could not do my duty to it, for I was not a child of God.'

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* It is a principle held by *some* ministers, that no child should be baptized except one of the parents, at least, is a member.

"'And have you been accustomed, for so long a time, to read your Bible carefully?'

"'Oh! I have read it all again and again! I read it daily. I have prayed and wept over this subject for long *years!* and I have waited for the Holy Spirit to renew my heart.'

"'And have you been waiting for the Holy Spirit for three years in this state of mind?'

"'Indeed, sir, I have.'

"'Then, for *three years you have been waiting* for what God *gave you three years ago.* It was the Holy Spirit which first led you to feel you were a sinner, and needed Christ. The Holy Spirit has been striving with you all along, and you did not know it. He led you to the Bible. He led you to prayer. He sent you here to-night. He strives with you *now*, to lead you to Christ for forgiveness and peace.'

"'Do you think *so?*' said she, with astonishment.

"'I *know so*,' said I. 'God has been better to you than you have thought. He has done what you have never given him credit for. He has called, and you have refused. He has invited, and you have held back. You thought you must not come, and could not. You may, on the spot. The Holy Spirit has not left you yet. I wonder that he has not; but you have another call to-night. And now, madam, accept his invitation; repent; take Christ as your Saviour. Go home, and give your heart to God, just as it is. You cannot make it better. The Holy Spirit is with you. Do not resist him any longer. You have stayed away from Christ because you supposed you must. You wanted the Holy Spirit *first;* and thought you must not come to Christ till your heart was better. The dispensation of the Spirit is in his hands. Go to the fountain. The Bible nowhere tells you to *wait* for the Holy Spirit; but, fleeing to Christ, to depend on his aid *now.*'

"'Pardon me, sir, I must ask you again, if you really think the Holy Spirit is striving with me?'

"'Yes, my dear friend, I *know* he is. He has been for years. He offers you his aid. He calls you to Christ now. Go to Christ. Repent to-night. Accept and rest on Christ now. The Holy Ghost saith, "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart."'

"'And is that all you have to say to me about the Holy Spirit?'

"'Yes, that is *all.* The Holy Spirit this moment strives with you. God is willing to save you. Nothing but your own unbelief and impenitence can ruin you.'"

We now take an extract from the sketch, entitled, "I can't repent:"—

"'But,' said he, 'I can't repent and come to Christ *of myself.*'

"'*I* certainly never said you could; and never wished you to think you could. In my opinion, God does not wish you to think so. And if you have found out that you cannot repent of yourself, aside from divine aid, I am glad of it—you have found out an important truth. Most certainly God does not tell you to repent *of yourself.* He tells you that "Christ is exalted to give repentance." He says to every sinner, "Thou hast destroyed thyself; in me is thy help." Let him take

hold on my strength that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me." On the ground that they need it, he has promised "the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." God never expects you to repent without divine aid, but with it. He knows you are too wicked to do it; that you are without strength, helpless, undone, a *lost* sinner! And here lies the very heart of your error. You have been trying to repent in a way that God never told you, just by your own powers, instead of trying to get God to have mercy upon you, and save you by his help. You have been looking to the powers within you, instead of looking to the aid above you; you have trusted to yourself, instead of trusting yourself to the grace of Christ. And that is the very reason why you have failed; and now you complain that you cannot repent; while, in reality, you have exactly the same sufficiency as the penitents around you. What has been their help may be your help. And the sooner you are driven off from all that self-seeking and self-reliance, the better it will be for you. You are in the double error of over-valuing your own. God is more merciful and more gracious than you think him to be. He is more ready to save you. And when he commands you to repent, he does not wish you to forget that all your hope lies in the immediate aid of his Holy Spirit. Nor does he wish you to attempt to dispense with that proffered assistance, by your not believing that you are as utterly helpless as you really are. He does not tell you to rely upon your own shattered strength; but you have done so. And when you have failed, you then turn round and complain that you "can't repent." You reject his offered help—the help of the omnipotent Spirit. And for this reason you will be the more criminal if you do not repent. That Divine Spirit is your only hope. If he leaves you to yourself, you are lost—eternally lost! Tread softly, my dear friend! The ground whereon thou standest is holy ground! Let not the Holy Spirit, who presides over the souls here this evening, bear witness against you in the day of the final judgment—"Because I have called, and ye refused!" You *can* repent; just in the way that others repent; just because God is your help. Trust him, and rely upon yourself no longer.'"

To this sketch the author appends the following observations:—

"To cut off the sinner from all reliance upon himself, his merits and his powers; and throw him, naked and helpless, into the hands of the Holy Spirit to lead him to Christ in faith, should be the one great aim of the ministry.

"Sinners certainly ought to repent, for God commands them to repent. But in my opinion he does not design to have them understand his command as having respect only to their own ability to repent, and not having respect to the proffered aids of the Holy Spirit. Such aids constitute one grand ground on which his command is obligatory, and sweep away every possible excuse. No man ever did repent without the Holy Spirit, or ever will; and this is no small amount of proof that no man ever can. Nothing seems to be gained by making a sinner believe that he is able to repent without divine assistance.

Such a belief will be very likely to mislead him to a reliance upon his own shattered strength. And as to his conviction of criminality for *not* coming to repentance, surely there is strong ground for such conviction, since God offers him all the ability he needs,—'*in me is thy help—let him take hold on my strength that he may make peace with me.*'"

And to these observations the following editorial note is appended by Mr. James:—

"He has natural powers for repentance, but no moral ability. The former should be pressed upon him as the ground of responsibility; the latter as pointing out the need of divine assistance.—ED."

We add but one extract more, and this shall be taken from the Introduction, where Mr. James is exhibiting what he conceives to have been "the author's theory, and the manner in which he applied it:"—

"The sinner is to be dealt with both as a rational creature, possessing all the natural faculties necessary to repentance and faith, and therefore as being capable of those states of mind, and both guilty and responsible to God for the want of them. At the same time he is to be treated as a creature that has lost all moral power, and is thus unable, because destitute of all will, to repent, and is to be reminded that he is dependent upon God's sovereign mercy for the grace indispensably necessary to repentance and faith. Hence, he is to be urged, under the former view of his condition, to repent and believe the Gospel—he is to be told that it is nothing but his own wicked heart that keeps him from repenting and believing, and his very pleas of inability are to be turned against him as proofs of his desperate wickedness; and yet he is to be told that nothing but divine grace, which God is under no obligation, beyond his own promise, to impart, will subdue his stubborn nature, and make him willing to repent and believe. For this grace he is to be urged immediately and earnestly to pray, but it must at the same time be the prayer of faith. So that he is to give all his energies to the great work of religion, but all in dependence upon the Spirit of God, to be thus sought by importunate and believing prayer."

It will be universally admitted, that no subject within the range of dogmatic and experimental theology can be more important than that which is thus presented to us, and that upon none can it be of more solemn necessity to have scriptural views, and to make a consistent application of them. We avow ourselves at once dissatisfied with the theory held by Dr. Spencer, and with the practical treatment founded upon it; and we trust we shall be doing a service to the cause of evangelical religion by submitting them to a candid and temperate discussion.

We shall begin by stating, in a few words, the several views held by orthodox divines on the general subject.

1. It is by some held that the Spirit is given to every man, as an internal light, or means of guidance, of which he is to make use, somewhat after the manner of the external light of revelation.

2. It is by others held that the Spirit is imparted to a portion only of mankind, and to these in order to carry out an eternal purpose of divine love in their actual regeneration and salvation.

3. Between these, which may be designated the two extremes of theological opinion, is a third view, which affirms that it is the office of the Spirit of God to strive with men, which he does sometimes without solicitation, and at others in answer to prayer.

The last of these opinions is that maintained by Dr. Spencer, as clearly shown in the extracts we have made, and as found, on a careful perusal, to pervade the whole of his book. To it we shall now state our objections.

I. In the first place, this theory has no real foundation in Scripture. We say no *real* foundation, because we are aware that it has an apparent one, but we think it can be easily shown that it is only apparent.

The principal passage, we believe, quoted in its support, is Genesis vi. 3, "And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man." Whatever might supposably be learnt from these words if they stood by themselves, or in a connexion which made them applicable to mankind in every age, and in relation to the great concern of their salvation, it is enough for our purpose to observe, that the actual connexion does not warrant—nay, it prohibits—any such application of them. The whole verse reads thus:—"And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet shall his days be an hundred and twenty years;" and it is doubtless rightly understood by the commentators as referring to the inspired ministry of Enoch and other prophets by whom God had rebuked the growing wickedness of the antediluvian world, and the limitation of his further longsuffering to the period of a hundred and twenty years.

Another passage on which reliance has been placed occurs in Acts vii. 51, where Stephen, addressing the Sanhedrim,

exclaims, "Ye stiffnecked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost." But here, again, a reference to the connexion plainly shows, that the resistance offered to the Holy Ghost was that made to an inspired ministry. The passage at greater length is this:—"Ye stiffnecked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have now been the betrayers and murderers." Doubtless the Spirit spake in the ancient prophets, as he had more recently spoken by the Lord, and was at that moment speaking by Stephen; and in this mode of his influence they resisted him.

The only other passages which occur to our recollection are the precepts, "Quench not the Spirit," 1 Thess. v. 19; "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God," Eph. iv. 30;—passages of which it is sufficient to observe, that they are utterly inapplicable, since they are addressed, not to unbelievers, but specifically to believers in Jesus, and relate exclusively to Christian privilege and duty.

Thus, destitute of any real foundation in the Oracles of God, the doctrine now under consideration may be deemed to be without any proper foundation at all, since the Holy Scriptures are the only fountain from which a just acquaintance with the work of redemption can be derived. It may be said, however, that, if not in the Bible, the doctrine is in human nature, and is embodied in the actual workings of man's heart under the force of evangelical appeals, amidst which the Holy Spirit does, in fact, strive with men.

We proceed, therefore, to show,—

II. In the second place, that Dr. Spencer's theory has no real foundation in human consciousness. We are aware, of course, of the phenomena on which it reposes. There are often in the heart of man in relation to religion, and under the force of Gospel truth, two classes of impulses, and these are not only diverse, but conflicting: the one class leads towards the world, its gains, its sins, its pleasures; the other class leads towards repentance and the service of God. That the opposition of these two causes a strife within there can be no doubt—a strife of variable intensity and uncertain continuance, but always perceptible, and sometimes vehement and

protracted; but when we are asked whether the better impulses are not due to the Holy Spirit of God, and do not constitute a striving of that Spirit with man, we answer, explicitly and distinctly, No, we think not. And we thus assign our reasons:—

First. The better impulses in question, however in a certain sense good, are not good enough to be fitly ascribed to the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is emphatically called the Holy Spirit, and all his influences on the heart of man must be regarded as having essentially a holy character and result. If it be pleaded that the influences under review may be considered holy, since they lead to thoughtfulness, to prayer, and to endeavours after peace with God, it is sufficient to reply, that they are, by the very nature of the hypothesis, consistent with unbelief—that is, with a state of reigning sin and impenitence. That anything really holy can be in such a heart it seems to us impossible to conceive; and it is equally impossible, of course, to conceive that the Spirit of holiness should be there.

Secondly. There is the less need to ascribe these better impulses to the Spirit of God, because a different and more satisfactory solution of the phenomenon readily presents itself. Everybody knows that man's moral nature comprehends two elements—the conscience and the passions, or (to use a familiar term) the heart. These are capable of being divided one from the other, and, indeed, of being placed in antagonism. The heart, in fact, has become corrupt, and is depraved; the conscience is uncorrupt, and with all its deficiency of light and want of sensibility, is, according to its light and sensibility, a faithful witness for God. Hence the inward strife. Corrupt passions impel men to a life of alienation from God, and to ever-varying forms of iniquity; a faithful conscience warns, reproves, remonstrates—a process to which the heart itself more or less responds, so that the strife penetrates to the innermost recesses of the bosom, and the man is truly enough at war with himself. We must, of course, leave it to those of our readers who are most largely acquainted with the inward strife to say whether this is to them an adequate account of it; our judgment it satisfies, and with such a solution of the phenomena at hand, it appears to us a mere work of supererogation to search for any other.

III. To revert to the doctrine we are examining. Since

it has no foundation, either in Holy Scripture or in human consciousness, the conclusion would seem direct and inevitable that it has no foundation at all, and that it ought to be abandoned as utterly unworthy of regard. It may be pleaded, however, that there is a fitness in it to the condition of human nature, to which, in its corrupt state, there is alleged to attach an inability to repent. Men cannot repent and turn to God without the Holy Spirit, it is affirmed; and therefore it is in the nature of equity that the Spirit should be given to them, or at least offered to them. On this point let us hear Dr. Spencer: "Sinners certainly ought to repent, for God commands them to repent. But, in my opinion, he does not design to have them understand his command as having respect only to their own ability to repent, and not having respect to the proffered aids of the Holy Spirit. Such aids constitute one grand ground on which his command is obligatory, and sweep away every possible excuse."

We cannot be too much obliged to this eminent divine for the frankness with which he has here expressed himself. We honour him for recognising the principle, so imperatively suggested by our sense of justice, but so tenaciously resisted by hyper-Calvinistic divines, that no command of God can be obligatory—that is to say, can be justly obligatory—on man, unless he be able to obey it. Hence, since (as is alleged) man is not able to repent without the Holy Spirit, he lays it down that "the proffered aids of the Holy Spirit constitute one grand ground on which the command to repent is obligatory." This is fair and candid. We would only ask whether "proffered aids" can equitably constitute a ground of obligation. Let us suppose a case. A master says to his servant, "Do such a piece of work." He replies, "I cannot;" which his master admits to be true; and he does not enforce the command, but he adds, "I will help you if you will ask me." Is the command *then* obligatory? Suppose the servant does not ask for help, what then is his fault? It cannot be his not doing the work, for that he is not able to do; it can be only his not asking for help. Thus the command to do the work passes entirely out of bearing; the only thing obligatory—even if that be so—being to ask for help. So we think the proffered aids of the Holy Spirit contribute nothing to render obligatory the command to repent. They may lay a ground for prayer, and a sinner may be wrong—

we will not dispute this point at present—because he does not pray; but he certainly cannot be charged with wrong because he does not repent. To us it is clear that, in order to be justly obligatory, a command must be proportionate to the strength which a man has, not to that which he may get by asking for it.

From a note appended to this passage by Mr. James, it is evident that he perceives the fallacy involved in the theory of Dr. Spencer; and he endeavours to clear up the matter by the following statement: "He [man] has natural powers for repentance, but no moral ability. The former should be pressed upon him as the ground of responsibility; the latter, as pointing out the need of divine assistance." So Christian teachers differ, and unhappily much to the embarrassment of those who would fain learn from them the truth as it is in Jesus. But let us examine Mr. James's doctrine. Man, he assures us, "has natural powers for repentance;" that is to say, in the use of his natural powers, and without the Holy Spirit, man can repent; and this, no doubt, constitutes a just "ground of responsibility." Perfectly clear and satisfactory. Now for the qualification which Mr. James thinks it necessary to add to this statement: Man "has natural powers to repent, but no moral ability." "Moral ability!" What is the meaning of "moral ability"? Courteous reader, Mr. James shall explain himself. He gives us in the Introduction the following somewhat enlarged version of the brief statement we have now before us, as follows:—

"The sinner is to be dealt with both as a rational creature, possessing all the natural faculties necessary to repentance and faith, and therefore as being capable of those states of mind, and both guilty and responsible to God for the want of them. At the same time he is to be treated as a creature that has lost all moral power, and is thus unable, because destitute of all will, to repent, and is to be reminded that he is dependent upon God's sovereign mercy for the grace indispensably necessary to repentance and faith."

We learn, then, that "moral power" is "will," and are informed that, inasmuch as a sinner has no will to repent, he has no moral power to repent. Now we beg it may be clearly understood that we entirely agree with Mr. James that a sinner has no will to repent; we should only ask him in what way, or in what sense, this can make him unable to repent. He says will is "moral power." Is he not aware

that in thus using the word power he is using it out of its proper meaning, and in a figurative sense, a mode very apt to mislead? That Mr. James does not hold the absurd notion, that will to do an action is an element of a man's power to do it, is evident from his own language in the former part of the paragraph we have quoted; why, then, does he speak of will as power at all? Oh, says he, it is not power, it is only "moral power." And what is the meaning, we again ask, of "moral power"? As Mr. James has given us no explanation of this cloudy phrase, we must find one for ourselves; and all we can say is, that we suppose will to be called "moral power," because it is power so far as power consists in the will—a mere form of mystification. But we say at once that power does not consist in will at all; and that what a man, or any other being, can or cannot do is to be determined by the kind and condition of his natural faculties, without any reference whatever to the inclination of his will. In writing thus, we are not writing in ignorance of the scholastic distinction between natural and moral ability, or of the use which has been made of it in theological controversy; but we say, without hesitation, that we think it at once unfounded and unfortunate: unfounded, because, strictly understood—and in such matters as these all terms should be strictly understood—power is but one thing, and consists in possessing adapted and adequate natural faculties; unfortunate, because it has caused great perplexity where there ought to be great plainness, and has entangled both the preachers and the hearers of the Gospel in miserable and pernicious inconsistencies.

As a sample of these last, the paragraph of Mr. James's which we have now before us affords us as instructive instances as can be desired. Here is one of them. A sinner is to be told that he is both able and unable to repent. "That is strange," says he; "what kind of philosophy do you call this?" "Why," his teacher rejoins, "you are naturally able, but morally unable." "Oh, very well," he replies; "but I really am unable, am I?" "O yes; you must not doubt that." "Thank you," he exclaims; "then I shall never believe that a just God will send me to hell for not repenting." Here is another of them. God is willing to impart his Spirit, and "for this grace he (the sinner) is to be urged immediately and earnestly to pray, but it must, at the

same time, be the prayer of faith." Poor fellow! he must pray for faith, and yet he must have faith before he prays. Pray, Mr. James, how *is* the sinner to get this? Here is yet a third. A sinner is "to be urged to repent and believe the Gospel," and "yet he is to be told that nothing but divine grace will* [can] make him willing to repent and believe. For this grace he is to be urged immediately to pray." How so? This is truly "another Gospel." According to the New Testament, the *first* thing a sinner is to do is to repent and believe the Gospel; according to Mr. James's Gospel, the first thing a sinner is to do is to pray for grace to help him to repent and believe. Why, how is an impenitent and unbelieving sinner to be supposed to have any desire to repent and believe? And how could such desires, if he had them, find access to a throne of grace, the only approach to which is through the one Mediator, Christ Jesus?

Such are some of the consequences resulting from the habit of telling sinners they "can't repent." "But," says Dr. Spencer, "nothing seems to be gained by making a sinner believe that he is able to repent without divine assistance." Why, if it be true, we may leave God responsible for the consequences; but is "nothing to be gained" by it? Is it nothing to make a sinner feel beyond all dispute the justice of the command, and the undeniable guilt of his impenitence? Is it nothing to shut him up to the duty and necessity of immediate repentance? Or is it really better to place him in a position in which he can fairly say, "God has not given me his Holy Spirit, I, therefore, cannot repent yet;" or plead in excuse for years of impenitence and sin a host of alleged unanswered prayers?

From the remarks we have made, it will be obvious that as we take one great step with Dr. Spencer, so we take another with Mr. James. With the former we hold that every just command must be proportionate to the power to obey, and with the latter we hold that man, "as a rational creature, possesses all the natural faculties necessary to repentance and faith." To him, as such rational creature, we think the Gospel makes a direct and equitable appeal; and every man

* The word *can* is clearly required by the argument in this place; and the substitution of the word *will* for it (of which we dare say Mr. James was scarcely, if at all, conscious) betrays a latent sense of the fallacy which is lurking in it.

will be justly answerable for the response he makes to it. Man, however, has no will to repent; true, but the government of man's will, or rather of the passions and impulses which determine it, is a department of moral action which, with adequate powers, God has confided to man himself, and a department into which it is not at all necessary that, for purposes of equity, God should more specially enter.

4. But, if not for purposes of equity, yet in a spirit of kindness may it not be supposed that the difficulty (to use the gentlest term) in the way of man's repentance may be met and relieved by the all-merciful Author of salvation? And are there not at once phases of human feeling which require such relief, and passages of Holy Scripture which encourage the expectation of it?

We wish to deal with this part of the subject very tenderly, and to do the amplest justice both to the loving-kindness of the Lord, and the feelings of those who conceive themselves to be seeking him; but we must be also faithful to "the law and the testimony." Our guiding light is there.

First, then, for the passages of Holy Writ which are said to hold out a hope of the Holy Spirit to impenitent sinners. One of these often cited is from Proverbs i. 23: "Turn you at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you." But this text is misunderstood, we think, if referred to the influence of the Spirit on the heart. If the whole be quoted, as it plainly should be, the latter part will be found to explain the former: "Turn you at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you; I will *make known my words* unto you." Another passage, also often quoted, is in Luke xi. 13: "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him." In one of the cases recorded by Dr. Spencer he makes use of this appeal; and the objection, not unnaturally raised, "But I am not one of his children," he endeavours to silence by saying, "It is not to his children, it is to them that ask him." We have grave doubts, we must confess, of this explanation; it seems to us, on the other hand, that the common sense of the case was rather with the inquirer than the minister. We cannot but think that the parallel of parental love, and the appellation, "your heavenly Father," rule the whole passage, and limit the phrase, "them that ask him," to the children.

Secondly, from this notice of the scriptural warrant for encouragement, let us turn to those experimental exercises which are deemed to require it. Upon these Dr. Spencer dwells with great force, and tells us of sinners, totally impenitent and unbelieving, yet earnestly desirous of being Christians, trying, and trying hard, to repent, and grieved to desperation because they cannot overcome the hardness of their hearts. Should there not be some pity shown, and some help afforded, to these worthy and deserving, but unfortunate people? May God preserve us from hard-heartedness, and teach us to pity, as he himself has pitied! But, with the Bible in our hands, we cannot at all understand the phase of human nature here presented to us. The doctrine of Scripture is, that "the carnal mind is enmity against God," Rom. viii. 7. "And you, that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled," Col. i. 21. It is, indeed, upon a universal charge of enmity that the great appeal of the Gospel must be conceived to rest; "Be ye reconciled to God," 2 Cor. v. 20. But if this is to be received as a true statement of the case, the phenomena described by Dr. Spencer are not merely strange, they are impossible. To suppose their existence, is to suppose enmity and friendship to exist at the same time towards the same object. Moreover, the salvation of God is a holy salvation, and the Spirit of God is a holy Spirit; and to suppose that there are any real desires after these in an impenitent sinner's heart, is to suppose that there is something holy there, and to deny its total corruption. It is further to abrogate the necessity and to ignore the fact of conversion itself; for, if there be such desires as these before conversion, this change can be nothing new, but merely the carrying out of an ungodly man's previous desires, and building up a character on the foundation which he has himself laid. Such things, we think, cannot be.

If we are asked whether, after all, there is not such experience as that which Dr. Spencer has described, we must beg to distinguish between his facts and his explanations of facts. The facts we admit. People do say that they want to be Christians, that they try to repent, and so forth—and, doubtless, they say what they believe to be true; but they do not rightly understand their own feelings, and it is for their religious instructors to understand them more correctly. In

our judgment, there are two issues to which exercises of this kind may be traced; on the one hand, they may be various forms of self-deception; or, on the other hand, they may be the perplexed and indistinct actings of sincere piety—in very many cases, we suspect and hope, the latter. It was a pithy saying of the old English divines, "The desire of grace is grace," and there is important truth in it. With us, the desire to repent is repentance; for it is only from an antecedent, though unrecognised, repentance that the desire to repent can be conceived to have arisen. Whether a professed desire to repent is of this kind or not must be ascertained by its accompaniments and its fruits. If it be genuine, it will, doubtless, lead to Christ and to holiness, in which case the party is quite withdrawn from the scope of our present argument; if there is reason to believe that it is not genuine, then there is no scope for help to be given, nor need of encouragement to ask for it. How can you help a man who really does not mean to make the effort to which your help would be directed? Or if you were to tell him he could have help for asking for, what would be its advantage?

To us, the great aspect of God's mercy to sinners has relation to their condition of guilt and condemnation. "God hath appeared in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," 2 Cor. v. 18. "God hath so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John iii. 16. This mercy is infinitely rich, free, and full. It welcomes the vilest of sinners, and sinners in the vilest of conditions. It needs but to be accepted, and the motives to its acceptance, whether of interest, duty, or gratitude, are the most weighty and touching ever presented to human thought. These constitute the great object towards which a sinner's eye should be turned, "the power of God unto salvation." It is, in our view, a sad mistake and a grievous injury to divert attention from these truths of power, by flattering a man that he is trying to repent, and telling him to pray. This is only to bring him into conflict with his own heart, armed with weapons of neither edge nor temper.

We have expressed our opinion that the government of himself is a department of action which God has confided to man with adequate powers, and a department, consequently,

into which, for purposes of equity, God is not called upon personally to enter. We have endeavoured to show, also, that no ground exists for that plea of kindness on which an offer of the Holy Spirit in answer to prayer has been advocated. We have now, in conclusion, to avow our belief that, for a purpose of special kindness, God does in some cases personally enter the human breast, and, by the almighty grace of his blessed Spirit, effect an entire transformation there. We believe this operation of the Spirit to be, not accidental, but regulated by God's electing love. From a world of sinners who will not repent, God has from everlasting a chosen people for himself in Christ Jesus; and to carry out in its completeness this purpose of redeeming love, he sends his Spirit into their hearts. To him be the glory of their salvation, for ever and ever. Amen.

ON PRAYER.

ON PRAYER.

WHAT PRAYER IS.

PRAYER is far from being of an uniform quality. Sometimes it is the utterance of the most passionate emotions, whether of desire, delight, or agony. At others it is altogether formal; it is even, on some occasions, absolutely hypocritical. And between these extremes there are diversities almost endless, comprehending, as in a graduated scale, all the various modes and degrees of feeling to which the human mind, by various means and in various circumstances, may be excited.

It may be thought, perhaps, that in designating as *prayer* addresses to God which are hypocritical, or even formal, I am wrong; but it will not be difficult to show, that I am using the word *prayer*, not only in its customary, but in its scriptural sense. Let the reader only ponder the following language of the Teacher sent from God: "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men." (Matt. vi. 5.) "Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers." (Matt. xxiii. 14.) I know that prayer *ought* to be sincere; and that, by a usual freedom of language, it may be said that heartless prayer is no prayer, that is, no prayer of value: but this does not affect the real meaning of the term, nor do I know any considerations which ought to supersede the scriptural and customary phraseology. On the contrary, I am convinced that an attempt to do so would lead to great perplexities, and to no inconsiderable mischiefs.

For my own part I retain, and throughout this little treatise shall employ, the language of Holy Writ; and I proceed to observe accordingly, that formality and feeling, in all their varieties, are the accidents of prayer, and not its essentials. There is no shade of either of them which prayer may not possess, nor any of which prayer may not be destitute. None of them, therefore, can be essential. What then remains? Simply, *a petitionary address to God.* And this is prayer; of whatever it may be really expressive, or in whatever degree it may be either mentally or verbally performed.

1. Now, concerning prayer, as thus defined, I observe in the first place, that it is *an inestimable privilege.* It is a privilege

for us, I mean, to be permitted to address petitions to the God of heaven, with hope of acceptance and success. In our present condition we become sensible of innumerable wants, sorrows, and dangers; and find ourselves often, not only insufficient to accomplish our desires, but utterly helpless in our sufferings. We have important interests, both of body and soul, both for time and eternity; all of which are or may be brought into imminent hazard, and some of them threatened by powerful adversaries. What should we do in such circumstances, if the ear of the Lord were not open to our cry? How melancholy were our condition if we were shut out from his presence, and without a warrant or a welcome to approach his footstool! What a mercy it is for us, that the treasures of wisdom and might which "in our Jehovah dwell" are not inaccessible to us; that even our guilt and pollution, though they constitute an awful impediment to our approach, have not been insurmountable to the riches of his grace; but that, through the appointed Mediator, we may have access with boldness! What blessed words to the needy and the helpless are these! "Ask, and it shall be given you, seek, and ye shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Matt. vii. 7, 8.

2. I observe, secondly, that prayer is *a universal duty.* And the duty of prayer clearly arises out of the state of dependence in which we are placed. We possess nothing which we do not receive. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights." (James i. 17.) We are obviously dependent on him for life, and breath, and all things; for our perpetual safety, and our daily food; and being thus situated, it is an homage due on our part to the God of our mercies to make supplication for such things as we need. To restrain prayer before God, must surely be a token of deplorable inconsideration, if not of cherished pride and presumption, and would unequivocally indicate a reckless and ungrateful disregard of the hand that feeds us. It is among the clearest dictates of Scripture and common sense, "that men ought always to pray." Luke xviii. 1.

WHAT PRAYER MAY BE.

I HAVE thus briefly shown what prayer is in itself, namely, a petitionary address to God; and what it is to us under this aspect, namely, an inestimable privilege, and a universal duty. I proceed now to observe, that the character of prayer may be, and indeed must be, greatly modified by its quality. It will become to us experimentally a very different thing, according to

the feelings of which it may be expressive, and the intensity to which they may be excited. It is a privilege and a duty, even to the thoughtless and the profane; but it is more than this, much more, to the Christian, to the man who finds the way of access by faith in a bleeding Saviour, and brings warm affections into exercise as he draws near to God. What then is prayer to the Christian?

1. I answer, first, *a source of exquisite delight.* Once an enemy to God, he has been graciously reconciled by the blood of Christ, and thus brought into a state of friendship with God so blessed, that intercourse with him becomes his greatest joy. Hence prayer also becomes delightful, because it is an exercise in which he draws more near to God than in any other. It affords an enlarged and a peculiar scope for communion with God; and becomes to him a season in which he not only makes supplication for the mercies he needs, but renders thanks for what he has received, and otherwise pours out his heart in adoration, love, and praise. Though the heart of a Christian is too often contracted in these exercises, it is at some happy periods very much enlarged; and no limit can be set to the rapturous enjoyments attainable in this method, but by the capacity of our mortal frame to sustain the ecstasies of the mind.

2. Secondly, To the Christian prayer becomes *a channel of habitual relief,* amidst the necessities and trials of life. It is a practical privilege to him, for he makes use of it. In all things, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, he makes known his requests unto God; and, in the midst of many trials, he is able, in a happy measure, to testify that the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keeps his heart and mind through Christ Jesus. (Phil. iv. 7.) It becomes his habit to carry all things before God, to seek his blessing and direction, and to resign to his will such of his desires as his heavenly Father may not see fit to gratify. He cultivates a praying spirit, as he does the fear of the Lord, "all the day long;" and, in any sudden emergency, throws himself instantly on the arm of his ever-present Friend. Prayer thus becomes the very staff that supports his steps; and no detail can exhibit the countless and inestimable benefits of which it is daily and hourly the source to him.

3. Thirdly, Prayer is *a powerful aid to Christian experience.* By the close contact into which it brings the mind with divine things, and especially with God himself, it has a direct tendency to discover the actual state of our feelings, and to make us sensible how far a lively spirituality exists or is wanting. This is the reason why sometimes, and perhaps often, when we attempt to pray, our hearts seem more barren and distracted than before, as though a change for the worse had suddenly taken place in them; when the fact is that the holy nature of the exercise on

which we have entered has detected and made evident the carnality which previously existed. Though certainly not a pleasant effect of prayer, this may be reckoned, perhaps, among its most useful ones. It is in prayer, likewise, that we come into most direct conflict with our corruptions, that we are most deeply penetrated with sorrow for our sins, and most powerfully awakened to loathing and renunciation of them. It is in prayer that we are led to take the firmest grasp of the blood-sealed promises of the Gospel, to exercise the simplest and most joyful dependence on the Saviour, and to yield to him the most unreserved dedication. It is in prayer that we obtain the most ample views of our obligations to Christ, and take the justest measure of our capabilities of serving him; that we feel most quickened to activity, and nerved for the destruction of our habitual sloth. But I scarcely know where I should end, if I were to allow myself to prolong this enumeration. If the rest of his life is his working-time for God, the seasons of prayer are a Christian's working-time for himself. They bring him to work upon his own character. They are the growing seasons of his graces; and there is undoubtedly more growth in grace effected by the influence of prayer, direct and indirect, than by all other methods together. It is on his knees that the Christian acquires an increasing fitness at once for earth and for heaven; that he best girds himself with strength for his toils, and most joyfully anticipates his rest. Thus he prepares to live; thus he prepares to die; nor otherwise does he prepare to be for ever with the Lord.

O that I who have written these lines—O that every one who reads them—may know by experience their truth and blessedness! Amen.

WHAT PRAYER CANNOT BE.

QUITE agreeing with me, probably, in all that I have hitherto said, my reader, perhaps, may observe, that I have not specified *all* the advantages with which prayer has been supposed to be associated; and it is necessary I should now inform him that, in my judgment, prayer is sometimes made use of for purposes which, according to the Scriptures, it cannot answer. Upon this point I shall endeavour to be as clear as possible, but I must beg the reader's patient and candid attention.

I have just been speaking of the great advantages of prayer to persons *who are Christians*—persons, that is to say, who have repented of sin, and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation; and I might have said a great deal more of those advantages if the limits I wish to observe would have allowed it. But prayer is sometimes, I might say often, resorted to by persons who *have not* repented of sin, nor believed in the Lord Jesus

Christ for salvation; and it is of the uses such persons make of it that I am now about to speak. These persons may of course be called unbelievers, or impenitent sinners. Now, when impenitent sinners are sufficiently concerned about religion to pray at all, they usually do it for one or other of these purposes: either they pray that God will forgive their sins and save their souls; or they pray that God will give them his Holy Spirit, to change their hearts; or they pray because prayer is a duty, and they think it may go better with them if they fulfil it. Now I think it can be made to appear from the Word of God, that prayer will not answer any of these ends, nor any other useful end, *to the persons in question*, that is, to impenitent sinners.

Now, to make my way clear in this matter, let me first be permitted to guard against a misunderstanding. I am not saying that it is not an impenitent sinner's *duty* to pray. On the contrary, I have said already that it is every person's duty to pray, as it is to do every thing else that is holy and right; what I say is, that it will be *of no use* for an impenitent sinner to pray. And I will show my reasons for saying so.

1. An impenitent sinner is in *a state of wrath.* The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, and every transgressor is under a curse, from which nothing but faith in Christ can release him. With this state of wrath an acceptable approach to God is plainly incompatible. A person whose prayers God accepts cannot be said to be under his wrath, inasmuch as this is obviously an act of favour and friendship. If, therefore, the prayers of impenitent sinners can be accepted, they are not under wrath; or, if they are under wrath, their prayers cannot be accepted.

2. Impenitent sinners are *in a state of impurity*—of prevailing and cherished impurity. They love sin, for they are sinners who have not repented. But God is a holy God; he abhors sin, and must necessarily abhor all who love it. The Lord is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. He can look with favour upon no being that is unholy, nor can he hold any gracious communication with such a being, but through a Mediator. His holiness is so intense, that it renders him, in any other method, like a consuming fire; so that, in attempting to approach him we should find no access, but rather incur the risk of destruction. For the prayer of an impenitent sinner to be accepted, therefore, is impossible.

3. *All encouragement held out in the Scriptures to approach to God in prayer is through the atonement and mediation of Christ.* So says our divine Lord himself:—"Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father *in my name*, he will give it you." (John xv. 16.) "For *through him* we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." (Eph. ii. 18.) "Therefore, *being justified by faith*, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have

access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." (Rom. v. 1, 2.) It is a most blessed truth that *through Christ* there is access to God for the vilest of sinners; but the Word of God says nothing of a welcome in any other way: and if so, then there is no welcome for impenitent sinners. They have not believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, but are at this moment rejecting him, whatever words of prayer they may employ: if, therefore, they find access to God, it must be in some way of which the Gospel knows nothing, and in some way, moreover, which tends to depreciate, if not to supersede, the atoning work of the Son of God.

4. *The language of the Sacred Scriptures respecting prayer is clearly discriminating.* It is by no means intimated that whoever prays shall be heard; on the contrary, we have certain characters pointed out whose prayers shall not be heard. Consider seriously the following passages:—"The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination to the Lord." (Prov. xv. 8.) "When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear." (Isa. i. 15.) "Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and put the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their face; should I be inquired of at all by them?" (Ezek. xiv. 3.) "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." (Psalm lxvi. 18.) "Ye ask, and have not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." (James iv. 3.) No language can more clearly describe the character of an impenitent sinner than that used in several of these passages; and we are distinctly told, that should he make many prayers, the Lord will not hear. As to the words of our Lord, which have been already quoted from Matt. vii., "Ask, and it shall be given you," &c., the context determines them to refer only to the children of God, or those who can look up to him as their "Father who is in heaven." (See ver. 11.) It is clearly, therefore, to be set down as a principle, that not every one who prays will be heard, but only those who pray *in the attitude in which God has promised to hear.*

5. *There is nothing in the desires of an impenitent sinner of a nature to be acceptable to God.* An impenitent sinner is one who has not repented of sin; he is one, therefore, who has no desire to be saved from it; on the contrary, he loves it, and cleaves to it. Now such a sinner may be concerned, nay, very deeply concerned, about his soul, and in agony lest he should perish. In a common way it would be said he was concerned about salvation, and that such petitions as he would address to God would express desires after salvation; yet it is clear that his desires are *not* directed to the salvation which God has provided, for that is a salvation *from sin*, as well as from wrath; whereas the sinner in question desires to be left in sin, and delivered from wrath only. And it is equally clear, that such a desire must not only fail of being acceptable to God, but must be an offence to him. So

when it is imagined that an impenitent sinner in prayer would be seeking God's favour, the supposition is equally erroneous. As an impenitent sinner, he is obviously an enemy to God; for if he was not so, he would have repented of his sins. How then can a cherished enmity to God be compatible with a fervent desire for his friendship? His desire is merely that of a captured traitor that he may not be executed, unaccompanied by any intention of surrendering his treasonable designs. Can such a desire be acceptable to the King of kings? And again, when an impenitent sinner is encouraged to pray for the Holy Spirit, can anything be more mistaken than to suppose he has any real desire for such a gift? The very name HOLY Spirit ought to dispel this imagination. An impenitent sinner is unholy, and all his desires are so; he does not wish for anything that would make him holy, or divide him from his sins; he dreads and avoids even those exercises of thought and meditation which tend to such an issue; how much more must he deprecate an influence which would infallibly accomplish it! A sinner cannot be supposed to long for the entrance of the Holy Ghost, who is resolutely closing his heart against the power of the Gospel. If he prays for it, therefore, he is a hypocrite, and we all know what reception the prayer of the hypocrite meets with in heaven. Similar observations might be applied to all the desires which an impenitent sinner may be conceived to address to God. None of them are of a nature in which a holy being can be complacent.

THE TEST OF EXPERIENCE.

FOR these reasons it appears plain, that for an impenitent sinner to pray can be of no use; but this interesting and important question may be put, before we leave it, to the test of experience. I am very well aware that many persons see and feel so little of their own pollution and guilt, and of the holiness and glory of God, that they may find the foregoing representations repulsive to their minds, however clearly they may accord with the Inspired Word. But these are the feelings of ungodly men, by which we cannot consent to try evangelical truths. All those who have been taught of God see things very differently. It is characteristic of the first teachings of the blessed Spirit, to open to a sinner the deep-seated corruption of his heart, and the awful heinousness of his iniquities; to show him the glorious holiness and inflexible righteousness of the God with whom he has to do; and to annihilate every ground of confidence or of hope, excepting the precious blood and perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. Now I ask what any person under these exercises would think of approaching the divine

Majesty by prayer impenitently? I ask, whether he has not stood before a holy and righteous God, so sensible of the abhorrence and wrath of his Maker, and so conscious of a corresponding abhorrence and condemnation of himself, that he dared not pray, or that if he prayed at all, it was in the words of Peter, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord"? And whether the relief to this sense of terrific repulse has not been found in the perception of the glory and adaptation of the Saviour, and the surrender of the heart at his cross? For my own part, I cannot conceive of a sinner who realizes God as "a consuming fire," venturing to approach him at all, *without previous submission to Christ.* I should as soon expect to see an Israelite rush into the flames that were kindled upon Sinai. And I connot but conclude, that every person who *can* pray before he repents and trusts in Christ Jesus, is yet essentially ignorant, both of God and of himself.

DISCOURAGEMENT RELIEVED.

My reader will perhaps now tell me that, at all events, this is *very discouraging.* Perhaps he may deem himself to belong to the class of impenitent sinners, though not quite unconcerned, as he hopes, about salvation. He has been used to pray, under an idea that this was the way to obtain the mercy of God and the help of his Spirit. "And now, if this is of no use," he may be ready to say, "what am I to do? My very last hope seems to be taken from me."

I am quite prepared for this appeal; and my answer to it, in one word, is this—*Prayer is not the way to be saved.* It has no adaptation to this end, and is nowhere in the Scriptures directed to be used for it. There need be no alarm, therefore, arising from the discovery that it would be of no avail. The way to be saved is a different thing altogether, and is full of the most blessed encouragements, without any reference to prayer at all.

As to the way in which a sinner is to be saved, dear reader, form your own conclusion from the passages which I will now adduce. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature; *he that believeth* and is baptized, shall be saved, *he that believeth not* shall be condemned." (Matt. xxviii.) "They went out and preached that men should *repent.*" "*Repent* ye, and *believe the Gospel.*" "*Repent*, therefore, of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." (Acts viii. 22.) "Testifying *repentance* towards God, and *faith* towards our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts xx. 21.) "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ*, and thou shalt be saved." (Acts xvi. 30, 31.) Nothing

can be more clear than it is from these, and a multitude of other passages, that the way to be saved is by repenting of sin, and believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. In only one of them is anything said about prayer at all, and there it is placed after repentance.

You will now be satisfied that the Scripture bears me out in saying that a sinner is not to be saved by prayer. If you are an impenitent sinner, therefore, you need not be discouraged because prayer is useless to you. Behold the door of hope. Repent of sin, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.

To make you more fully reconciled, however, to relinquish your hold of prayer, permit me to amplify a little what I have before intimated, that, as God does not require us to seek salvation by this exercise, so it really has no adaptation to our need. What we need in order to salvation is a justifying righteousness, to release us from the curse and condemnation of an avenging law: does prayer constitute or acquire this? What we need in order to salvation is an accepted advocate, to appear before God on our behalf: does prayer lead to this? Clearly not. God in his infinite mercy has provided both these; but prayer is not the exercise on our part which embraces and appropriates them. This is *faith*, which accordingly is *the instrument* of our salvation.

Besides, the attitude of prayer is altogether remote from the state of things existing between God and a sinner, when salvation comes into question. The design in this case of prayer is, of course, to persuade God, as though *He* were reluctant to save; whereas the truth is, that God has come forward to save, and is beseeching men to be reconciled to him, *they* being reluctant to be saved. Prayer is asking of God; whereas God has exhibited salvation, not to be *asked for*, but to be *received*.

If, therefore, dear reader, you are yet, as you fear, under the wrath of God, throw aside the hope of bettering your condition by prayer, without any reluctance, and without any question as to *the kind* of prayer which may be of the least or the greatest value. Every sort is worthless here. Undoubtedly they show the profoundest ignorance who suppose that salvation may be attained by prayers which are altogether formal; but there is no more real wisdom shown in placing dependence on prayers which are sincere, or fervent even to agony. As a condemned sinner, you want a justifying righteousness; which your prayers can never constitute, and of which they will never take hold. *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.* "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners," even the chief of them. 1 Tim. i. 15.

A SEARCHING INQUIRY.

I HAVE said these things to relieve discouragement; and if the state of my reader's mind be what it ought to be, they can scarcely fail to have that effect. O what a blessed thing it is for a poor condemned rebel to be told that there is provided for him a perfect righteousness, of which he is warranted immediately to take hold, by taking hold of which he shall be immediately justified, and being justified by it, shall have immediate access into the privileges of the sons of God! How ought a sinner's heart to leap for joy at the tidings, and his very soul to exclaim, "What things were gain to me, I count but loss that I may win Christ!" This is a method of salvation fully suited to his necessities, which prayer is not; and if any sinner will try it, he will find the superiority of it in an instant peace, which those who are praying for salvation labour for in vain.

But (it is melancholy to me to say so) I am not sure that the encouragement will be acceptable. Repenting of sin, and submitting to the righteousness of Christ, are things a great deal more difficult than prayer; they are things to which many persons who will pray are very reluctant, nay, against which they are resolved. They will pray, because they can do that, and very much to their own satisfaction too, and yet retain their love of sin and their pursuit of the world; but as for repenting of sin, and renouncing the world, they not only complain of the requirement, but they *will not do it;* and if salvation really depends upon it, they will perish first. Now it is plain that this distaste and rejection of God's way of salvation demonstrate the heart to be still enmity against him; and show, beyond all doubt, that sinners may go down to hell, not only praying all the way they go, but by their very prayers illuminating with fallacious hopes that melancholy road. Dear reader, is it thus with you?

THE SOURCE OF HELP.

IT is an obvious conclusion from the statements now made, that an impenitent sinner has no ground to pray for the Holy Spirit to help him to repent and believe the Gospel. I have no occasion to shrink from this conclusion; and before I proceed to show its consistency with Holy Scripture, I may observe, that I cannot in this respect be placed in a worse condition than those who hold a contrary sentiment. In maintaining that an impenitent sinner has a warrant to pray for the Holy Spirit, they are obliged to maintain, first, that a sinner's prayer may be accepted while his person is under the curse; an anti-evangelical notion, with which, I confess, I should not like any scheme of

mine to be loaded: and, secondly, that a holy gift can be desired by an unholy being, which I take to be an absolute and glaring impossibility. I ask, then, what encouragement it can be to a sinner, to tell him that, in order to help him to repent, he may pray for an influence which he utterly abhors, and will abhor so long as he has not repented? No scheme can leave him in a more discouraging position than this.

On my part, an impenitent sinner is told that, in his present attitude, he cannot pray acceptably for anything, and therefore not for the Holy Spirit; which certainly can be no loss to him, since for the Holy Spirit, if impenitent, he has no real desire. If then he says to me, What must I do? I repeat the answer, "Repent, and believe the Gospel." I have no other. If he rejoins, How? I reply, Think upon your ways, and turn your feet to God's commandments. (Ps. cxix. 59.) "Incline your ear" (Isa. lv. 3) to what God says to you, and ponder it according to its manifest importance. Then you will repent. Your heart will first smart, then it will break, and finally it will melt into penitence and faith. Then all will be right, and you will save your soul alive.

THE EVIL OF MISTAKES.

In the views now set forth, I am of course aware that there is not among pious persons a universal agreement; and I wish, in closing this short treatise, to say a few words in relation to the subject generally.

1. The habit of recommending impenitent sinners to pray has evidently arisen from the notion of their inability to repent without help; and it is an instructive example of the facility with which one error makes way for another. If there were no other evidence of the anti-scriptural character of the system of *cannotism*, this would be quite sufficient for its condemnation—that it has led ministers of Christ, almost universally, to supersede the great Gospel call to repentance and faith by another, for which there is no authority, and by which the Gospel itself is materially perverted: so that it has become almost a heresy to declare that a man is saved "by faith only." I feel deeply thankful to a merciful God, that this mischievous leaven is in course of expulsion from the churches.

2. Exhorting impenitent sinners to pray, as a measure conducive to their salvation, is highly injurious to them. And this in various ways.

It sanctions them in thinking that they cannot do the unwelcome things required of them, and thus furnishes them not only with a plausible, but with a valid reason (if it were true) for neglecting them.

It leads them to think that doing something else, and something less, than God requires, will be sufficient for their security; so that, although they do not repent of sin, yet, if they pray, they will not perish.

It enables them altogether to evade the call of the Gospel, which summons them *to act;* whereas by prayer they retire from action, and throw the whole burden upon God, whose help they have sought.

It postpones the *immediate* obligation of repentance, and induces the attitude and habit of *waiting*, in circumstances which call for an instant change.

It tends to foster the pride of the heart, and to cherish a spirit of self-righteousness; the habit of prayer coming almost inevitably to be regarded with complacency, in the light of duty done.

It tends to justify a state of continued impenitence; inasmuch as the sinner thinks that, having prayed, he has done all he can do, and that, if he then perishes, it is because God would not hear his prayers.

It tends to obstruct and impede conversion in the awakened, by affording a relief to their feelings different from that immediate relinquishment of the world, and surrender to Christ, which the Gospel requires.

It defers the consolation and joy of a convicted sinner, by diverting him from the direct, simple, and immediate reception of the Lord Jesus Christ, which the Gospel warrants, and for which he is prepared.

3. Undoubtedly the exercises of mind in sinners converted, or even awakened, will naturally lead more or less to prayer; and perhaps the very act of surrender to Christ may be effected on the knees. I find no fault with this, nor do I care at all to separate prayer from this connexion. I have endeavoured to show in what circumstances it is of no benefit; but in no circumstances is it any harm, unless it comes to be unscripturally relied upon. Let its connexion with the mental exercises in conversion be regarded merely as accidental and unimportant. Until you have submitted to Christ, whether you pray or not is of no consequence. The great thing is, that you should surrender your heart to him. Never mind the attitude. Do it in what attitude you like, *only do it.* Not until then are you *safe.* But then you may be *happy.* Then you may pray *with acceptance.* Every groan shall be made fragrant, by the intercession of the Saviour you have embraced. Then push your privilege. "Pray without ceasing." Carry everything to a throne of grace; and come boldly to it, that you may find mercy, and grace to help, in time of need.

JOHN HAMER, PRINTER, BRIGGATE, LEEDS.

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